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Werfel, Franz. Goat song (Theater guild library) tr. by Ruth Langner. Garden City, N.Y., Doubleday, n.d. 169p. paper, \$1.

On a countryside near the Danube, at a time of great unrest and amid a superstitious peasantry, a monster, secret shame of normal parents, is turned loose. He becomes a symbol of revolt and terrible bloodshed and destruction follow. This essentially Slavic play seems to mean that capitalism can never crush anarchy because it perpetually re-creates it in its own bosom.





# GOAT SONG

(*BOCKSGESANG*)

A Drama in Five Acts

BY

FRANZ WERFEL

TRANSLATED BY  
RUTH LANGNER



THE THEATRE GUILD VERSION

PUBLISHED FOR

THE THEATRE GUILD

BY

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NOT BLOW  
KISS ME

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COUNTRY LIFE PRESS, GARDEN CITY, N. Y.

## CHARACTERS

GOSPODAR (Squire) STEVAN MILIC  
MIRKO, his son  
MIRKO'S MOTHER  
GOSPODAR JEVREM VESILIC  
STANJA, his daughter  
STANJA'S MOTHER  
STARSINA  
THE OLD MAN OF KRASNOKRAJ  
THE OLD MAN OF MODRYGOR  
THE OLD MAN OF MEDEGYA  
THE OTHER OLD MEN  
THE CLERK  
BABKA  
A SERVANT  
A POPE (Greek Orthodox Priest)  
THE PHYSICIAN  
A MESSENGER  
BOGBOJ WITH THE WHITE BEARD  
JUVAN, the student  
TEITERLIK, an acrobat  
THE AMERICAN  
FEIWEL  
KRUNA  
THE OTHER RETURNED WANDERERS, UNLANDED MEN, and VAGABONDS  
AN INNKEEPER  
A BASHI BAZOOK  
SOLDIERS IN THE REGIMENT OF JANISSARIES  
THE DRUNKEN BUTCHER

*The action of the play takes place in a Slavic countryside  
beyond the Danube, at the close of the eighteenth century.*

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THE CAST OF THE THEATRE GUILD PRODUCTION  
As presented at the Guild Theatre, New York, January 25, 1926.

## GOAT SONG

By FRANZ WERFEL

Translation by Ruth Langner

The production directed by Jacob Ben Ami

Settings and costumes by Lee Simonson

### CHARACTERS

(In order of appearance)

|                                      |                    |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------|
| <i>Gospodar Stevan Milic</i> .....   | George Gaul        |
| <i>Mirko</i> .....                   | Dwight Frye        |
| <i>Mirko's Mother</i> .....          | Blanche Yurka      |
| <i>Gospodar Jevrem Vesilic</i> ..... | William Ingersoll  |
| <i>Stanja</i> .....                  | Lynn Fontanne      |
| <i>Stanja's Mother</i> .....         | Judith Lowry       |
| <i>Babka</i> .....                   | Helen Westley      |
| <i>Young Serving Man</i> .....       | Philip Loeb        |
| <i>Physician</i> .....               | Albert Bruning     |
| <i>Messenger</i> .....               | Béla Blau          |
| <i>Starsina</i> .....                | Erskine Sanford    |
| <i>Elder of Krasnokraj</i> .....     | Stanley G. Wood    |
| <i>Elder of Modrygor</i> .....       | Philip Loeb        |
| <i>Elder of Medegya</i> .....        | Anthony André      |
| <i>Clerk</i> .....                   | Harold Clurman     |
| <i>The American</i> .....            | Edward Fielding    |
| <i>Teiterlik</i> .....               | Herbert Yost       |
| <i>Reb Feizvel</i> .....             | Edward G. Robinson |
| <i>Bogoboj</i> .....                 | H. E. Humphreys    |
| <i>Kruna</i> .....                   | Zita Johann        |
| <i>Juvan</i> .....                   | Alfred Lunt        |
| <i>A Very Old Woman</i> .....        | Edmonia Nolley     |
| <i>An Old Man</i> .....              | Anthony André      |
| <i>A Man</i> .....                   | Donald Angus       |
| <i>Innkeeper</i> .....               | Martin Wolfson     |
| <i>Priest</i> .....                  | Erskine Sanford    |
| <i>Bashi Bazook</i> .....            | House Jamison      |
| <i>The Hangman</i> .....             | William Ingersoll  |

*Peasants, landless men, gypsies, soldiers, etc.*

# GOAT SONG

*ACT I—The farm kitchen of Gospodar Stevan Milic.*

*ACT II—Council Room of the Elders.*

*ACT III—Garden of a decayed inn.*

*ACT IV—Interior of a wooden village church of Greek Orthodox Faith.*

*ACT V—The ruins of Gospodar Stevan Milic's farm.*

*Stage Manager:* Horace M. Gardner

*Assistant Stage Managers:* Bélá Blau—Joyce Benner

The THEATRE GUILD, Inc.

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GOAT SONG

(BOCKSGESANG)

ACT ONE





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# GOAT SONG

## ACT ONE

*[The big farm kitchen of Gospodar Stevan Milic's house. Left, near the door, the oven with a bench running around it. . . . Right, many little windows lighted by a late March afternoon. In the darkening background a stair leads left, and in an alcove is the shrine of the holy pictures. A deserted table.]*

### Scene One

[GOSPODAR STEVAN MILIC, MIRKO, MIRKO'S MOTHER, GOSPODAR JEVREM VESILIC, STANJA, STANJA'S MOTHER, BABKA, A MAID.]

*The two families stand in a stiff and solemn row before the oven. BABKA and the MAID hand them little wooden glasses of prune brandy under the watchful housewife's eye of MIRKO'S MOTHER.]*

### STEVAN

One more little swallow before you go! Your health, my dear guests.

*[They drink.]*

## GOAT SONG

JEVREM

[*Wiping his mouth*]: You make a stiff drink here.

MIRKO'S MOTHER

I hope it brings you good health.

STANJA'S MOTHER

We thank you.

[*BABKA and the MAID exit.*]

STEVAN

Now we've talked it over to our heart's content and everything is signed and sealed. We are happy to see your little Stanja as the betrothed of our son, our son Mirko. Why is your daughter so silent? She hasn't said a word all day—the pretty one.

STANJA'S MOTHER

[*Nudges her daughter*]: Go on, talk, say something.

STANJA

[*Stands motionless. Only her bridal wreath of flowers and ribbon trembles lightly.*]

JEVREM

A silent one she is. Silent at home, as well. Don't think her stupid. I tell you, brother, she's cleverer than we old ones.

STEVAN

Other days, other ways. When our fathers gave me and Mother to each other no one asked us anything and no one would have listened to us anyway. Other days, other ways. Therefore I ask you, Stanjoschka, is there anything on your mind against Mirko here for a husband?

STANJA

Nothing!

JEVREM

Nothing, you hear?

STANJA'S MOTHER

Nothing, you hear?

MIRKO

[*Angrily*]: Why these questions, Father? It's not for you to ask her that.

STEVAN

Son, you know nothing of the ways of women. [*To STANJA*]: Well, then you are invited, dear Stanja, to stay here in the house until the fourth Sunday, as is the custom, and learn to know your new home. Look about the household, make the servants trust you. Mother will tell you whatever you want to know. But

## GOAT SONG

no work for you during these happy days. Enjoy your life with us to the full. Are you content?

STANJA

I am, and I thank you.

JEVREM and HIS WIFE

We, too, thank you.

STEVAN

This is solemn talk for young folks. Run along, children, no need to stand there before us old people shifting from one foot to the other. Go, and God be with you.

MIRKO

Come, Stanja!

[*They exit.*]

*Scene Two*

JEVREM

[*Shakes hands cordially with STEVAN*]: Ah! To-day I'm truly happy.

STANJA'S MOTHER

A young couple such as God smiles on.



## ACT ONE

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### MIRKO'S MOTHER

—And folks will envy.

#### JEVREM

We are both rich, dear kinsman and neighbor, and masters of many souls. Each of us gives as good as he gets. We need not hate each other like some fathers-in-law, for neither your child nor mine gets the worst of it. God grant you're as happy as I am.

#### STEVAN

I am, I am.

#### JEVREM

What a future for us both!

#### STEVAN

Yes, our paths go upward.

#### JEVREM

Our fathers were still tenant farmers and vassals to the Turk. But the Spahi has grown old and sits puffing his nargileh in the stone houses of the Vilajet, or looking wearily down from his battle towers into the rippling stream.

#### STEVAN

We have taken what was ours.

## JEVREM

And the Moslem; God protect him. His soldiers will defend us, for there is murmuring aplenty among the peasants against us, their masters and the owners of the land.

## STEVAN

Let him fear who has evil on his mind. Once our farmers, servants, tenants, barnyards, dairies, and vineyards are united, they will truly make a lord's estate.

## JEVREM

You know, that has been my thought for a long while. If a man gathers and multiplies his wealth and bows to the authorities he's sure of their help to guard his land. Are there many vagrants in your part of the country?

## STEVAN

All too many. And especially this year when such a lot of people have come home from beyond the Danube. It means trouble enough for me and the council of elders.

[*He sighs.*]

## JEVREM

It might be wise to be neighborly and allow them a bit of land for farming. Unused woods eat up the

fruitlands and cry for tilling. . . . [STEVAN nods.] And better still—your son, our son, the future master will raise him a regiment of followers out of these landless men. Such things have happened.

STEVAN

That would please his vanity.

[JEVREM *ostentatiously takes out a fat watch*; STEVAN *opens his eyes wide.*]

JEVREM

This comes from Vienna.

STEVAN

Yes. We are beginning to live in the world again.

JEVREM

God of my fathers! It's high time we went. We've long outstayed our welcome.

STEVAN

Don't say that! Stay a little longer.

JEVREM

Impossible! We'd get home late at night.

STEVAN

I will have your horses hitched, then.

[*Goes to the door.*]

## GOAT SONG

JEVREM

I'll go with you.

STEVAN

The women can wait here for us till then.  
[*Both exit.*]

*Scene Three*

STANJA'S MOTHER

I envy your house, my dear. Everything shining—dishes, silver, ornaments. And even the food you put before us. They can't bake or stew more tastily at the Emperor's in Vienna. I will tremble when you come to us. We poor people! And I envy my daughter Stanja, too, with the chance to copy your recipes; although the bad girl has no mind for those things.

MIRKO'S MOTHER

I'll find everything at your house just the same as mine. [*Politely.*] They say that you weave better than we can here. [*Pause.*]

STANJA'S MOTHER

Pardon me, my dear. You won't take offence if I say something? You look sad—not happy. . . . I say this only because I'm so fond of you.



## ACT ONE

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### MIRKO'S MOTHER

Forgive me! I am happy. God didn't bless me. I cannot show my happiness.

### STANJA'S MOTHER

God *has* blessed you! Aren't you proud of your boy?

### MIRKO'S MOTHER

Of my son? Of Mirko? Oh, I am proud of him.

### STANJA'S MOTHER

A son is always different from a daughter. The men are never satisfied with daughters. My old man . . . he's not near so good tempered as he seems . . . Many's the beating I've had because I bore a girl. That you've been spared. When the only child is a son there's joy in the house, and the fault findings are silenced. But, (forgive me, my love talks), perhaps some old, old sorrow clouds your joy. . . . I remember. . . . [*She shifts inquisitively on her chair.*] Two years before our fine boy came along . . . didn't you go the full nine months?  
[MIRKO'S MOTHER *is silent.*]

### STANJA'S MOTHER

[*Sympathetically watchful*]: The baby died quite young, eh? Even women who have ten or twelve and

mix the children's names never forget little ones like  
that. My love talks . . .

MIRKO'S MOTHER

The baby died at birth.

STANJA'S MOTHER

A boy?

MIRKO'S MOTHER

No.

STANJA'S MOTHER

Oh, a girl?

MIRKO'S MOTHER

No.

STANJA'S MOTHER

What? How so?

MIRKO'S MOTHER

[*Quickly*]: How stupid! Forgive me! It was a  
boy. Of course, a boy.

THE MEN'S VOICES

[*Through the window*]: Hey! You women!

MIRKO'S MOTHER

[*Rising swiftly*]: Let us not keep our old men waiting.

[*Both off.*]

*Scene Four*

[*Enter BABKA with dishes, the YOUNG SERVING MAN following.*]

MAN

Babka! It is hollering for you.

BABKA

What's hollering?

MAN

Or was it singing? Maybe it's singing! Hahaha! Haha . . .

BABKA

Fool, what are you talking about, and laughing at?

MAN

Oh, I'm a fool, am I? But just the same . . .

BABKA

[*Interrupting*]: What?

MAN

That!

BABKA

It won't be long before you've eaten your last spoonful of rice soup here.

MAN

[*Sings*]: If you have eyes to see  
A wanderer you will be.

BABKA

You have a mouth, too—to shut.

MAN

I know another song:  
And the little house of stone  
Has a fire of its own.

BABKA

You go sing your songs to the sheep.

MAN

You can't make me stop. [*Sings.*]  
Iron hinges on the door  
Seven locks and seven more—  
Who carries all those keys?

BABKA

Rascal! Get out of the master's room. They're coming.

[MAN *withdraws mockingly.*]

*Scene Five*

[MIRKO and STANJA enter, BABKA exits.]

MIRKO

Your parents are gone now. Are you sad?

STANJA

No, I am not sad.

MIRKO

Then you don't love your parents?

STANJA

I love them.

MIRKO

Then you must be sad. Doesn't it hurt you when something is over? The axle creaks, the horses draw up, the whip. . . . And then, something is ended.

STANJA

I never ache for what is past.

MIRKO

Oh, I often do. I can lie in the meadow hour after hour longing for the games I played there on the grass.

STANJA

That is because you are a man. [*Short pause.*]



MIRKO

Do the house and the farm please you?

STANJA

Why shouldn't they? House, rooms, chimneys, stables, pigsties, and hencoops and dovecots, same as everywhere.

MIRKO

And do I please you?

STANJA

Why shouldn't you please me?

MIRKO

Do you know, Stanja, I would have liked it better if you had cried before, when they left you. . . .  
[*Suddenly turns on her.*] You! What if you've loved someone before! Tell me! Have you loved someone else?

STANJA

[*Hesitatingly*]: No.

MIRKO

[*Slowly, his eyes closed*]: I think, when we're married, I will beat you.

STANJA

That's what all husbands do.

MIRKO

Did you tell me the truth?

STANJA

No.

MIRKO

Ah! You did love another before me, before me . . .

STANJA

Did I love him? Just once, I dreamed of him in the night. He'd been our guest for an hour. He wore a scholar's cap on his head and a laced coat. He was a student.

MIRKO

[*Presses her hand*]: Did he speak to you? Did you see him again? Or dream of him?

STANJA

Never again.

MIRKO

[*Lets her hand fall, brusquely*]: A student? Ho! You want to show me you're a smart one.

STANJA

[*Flashing*]: That takes no showing.

MIRKO

Damn!

STANJA

You led me through the rooms and closets up to the attic. We looked at all the stalls, the cattle, the dairies, the storehouse, the threshing floors, wine-presses, everything. But I have eyes . . .

MIRKO

[*Excited, tries to embrace her*]: Blue eyes, sharp, bad, sweet. . . .

STANJA

[*Thrusts him from her*]: But mighty quick you slipped by that little house of stone, and by that rusty iron door. You wouldn't look, and pushed me away. [*Triumphant.*] What does the smoking chimney of that big kennel mean? You light no fires for animals. That rising smoke is human. . . . I have eyes!

MIRKO

[*Stroking his forehead in helpless bewilderment*]: I do not know, Stanja. Believe me, I do not know. Ever since I was a little child that was the forbidden place that we hurried by in fear, with downcast eyes. I dared not ask my mother or my father. I love my—father—not as you love yours. So I kept still and

let my father bear the secret. I got used to it as a child and never gave it thought. But now! For twenty years, day after day, I have passed it—and always with my foreboding heart, yet never thinking of it. And now, all of a sudden, after so many years, I'm forced to think. . . . Yes, true enough! A fire's there each spring and winter. [*Seized by an obscure horror.*] Stanja! I will not ask my father. I'll never ask.

## STANJA

Now do you see who is the smart one? For twenty years you never thought or asked. But a woman comes to the house and asks you the first hour.

*Scene Six*

[*STEVAN enters.*]

## STEVAN

Still in the house, children? Away with you. They are finishing the dancing on the village green. The folks want to see you. It's only right the master's son and daughter should lead the dancers. [*To MIRKO*]: What's the matter?

## MIRKO

[*Urgently*]: Father!

STEVAN

You are your own master now. Here is some money. Make merry with your betrothed and treat your friends.

[MIRKO *hesitates.*]

Off with you. [*Impatiently.*] Go! [MIRKO *and* STANJA *go to the door.*] And call Babka for me.

[MIRKO *and* STANJA *exit.* STEVAN *quickly takes a long gun with a jointed butt down from the wall and loads it. Then he stands rigid for a few moments and hangs the weapon up again as hastily as he took it down.*]

*Scene Seven*

[BABKA *enters.*]

BABKA

Peace to you, master, peace at last.

STEVAN

[*Rousing from his abstraction, suddenly, hoarsely*]: His sickness?

BABKA

Master, he's getting better. The poor thing ate, drank and slept for the first time in many days.

STEVAN

[*Clenching his fists*]: Christ, why do you not help?

BABKA

His eyes roll again . . . round the walls . . .  
without stopping.

STEVAN

[*Almost screaming*]: On two feet or four, Babka?

BABKA

[*Quietly*]: On two and four—both.

STEVAN

Do you see to him daily?

BABKA

Daily at twilight, at the hour of the evening meal.

STEVAN

[*Looks at her in horror*]: You . . .

BABKA

Can I shun what I have suckled, shun him, the wild  
big thing that once was tiny with a greedy mouth?

STEVAN

He screamed to-day, the second time in his cursed  
life.

BABKA

He screamed for the joy of health with his ever si-  
lent voice.



STEVAN

Does he never greet you?

BABKA

No, but he knows his old Babka.

STEVAN

Did anybody hear the cry?

BABKA

Oh, yes, they heard him.

STEVAN

Heard? Satan . . .

BABKA

[*Interrupting him*]: That's what many say.

STEVAN

The people. . . . Get them all out of the house, you hear? To play games or to dance on the green—not a man or woman home before midnight. You hear?

BABKA

I knew your will, master. They are gone. Do nothing evil. [STEVAN *motions her to go*. BABKA, *at the door*]: Do nothing evil. [*Turns to go.*]

STEVAN

Babka, has he a human face?

BABKA

The face of a man, of an old man, a hundred years old, a face shrewd and knowing.

STEVAN

Give me the key.

BABKA

Why, master? Turn from such thoughts. Your life is happy now.

STEVAN

The key. [BABKA takes out a key and hands it to him.] You do not let it rust.

BABKA

You have the key now, master. [*Exits slowly.*]

STEVAN

[*Slowly, to himself*]: Shame, shame! Pain, shame!  
[*Groans. Collapses over the table.*]

*Scene Eight*

[MIRKO'S MOTHER enters.]

MOTHER

The people are gone. We are alone now. It is terrible.

STEVAN

[*Turns to her wildly*]: Tell me, tell me at last, tell me your awful secret. What you hid from me and then bore to our shame.

MOTHER

I had no secret from you but my pain at knowing that while I was heavy with child you lay with all the wenches.

STEVAN

Twisting my words again, with your woman's tongue!

MOTHER

You're brave enough to handle wild steers with your naked fists, but you'll lie to me till death, you coward.

STEVAN

You twister of words, you sly one. Who begot him in you? He cannot be my child. Sound stock, sound to the tenth generation, my seed.

MOTHER

Don't lie about yourself, you waster. How you must have filthied your seed that it could so lower me. Sound as I was, and clean when you took me.

STEVAN

There is much of you I do not know.

MOTHER

There is much of you I do not know.

STEVAN

But this I know. My first born was not baptised.

MOTHER

Who was it mocked the sacrament? Not I—not I.

STEVAN

Would you have had the courage to be a thing of loathing to the world?

MOTHER

Now the poor thing, unbaptised, will drag us with him down to hell.

STEVAN

Not us. You, you! This shame to me grew in your body.

MOTHER

[*On a scream*]: Oh, stop, stop . . .

STEVAN

[*Pleading*]: Don't cry, don't cry . . . Mother  
. . . don't cry.

MOTHER

A child after the night of pain, seven hours old,  
when the dawn came . . . rosy, sweet as milk,

lying there in its basket with the little cap already on its downy head. . . . No! That morning you did not look at him . . . nor I.

STEVAN

Is it my fault?

MOTHER

[*Even more wearily than he*]: Is it mine?

STEVAN

[*Bitter*]: Well-formed babies who have smiled up at their fathers die. Many, many. He is alive, has lived for three and twenty years. What does God mean?

MOTHER

Can't you ever stop thinking of it?

STEVAN

No. Everywhere I go I drag the secret, drag the secret with me.

MOTHER

Why do you never go in to him?

STEVAN

You ask that, you, his mother, his loving mother? Why have you never dared to look at that which you so love?

MOTHER

[*Trembling*]: Because I love so. . . .  
[*A knock, the PHYSICIAN enters.*]

*Scene Nine*

PHYSICIAN

A good evening to you, Stevan Milic, a good evening to you, dear mistress of the house. I hear there has been a betrothal in this house. I give you my best wishes. Yes, money flows to money as water does to water. And I in my little wagon have grown to be sixty with no second nag to make up my team. How long is it, Gospodar, since I last visited you?

STEVAN

I can tell you to the day, Master Physician. It's twelve years.

PHYSICIAN

Gracious heavens. I used to come this way more often. Everything gone well with you?

STEVAN

As well as God wills.

PHYSICIAN

God, God!! Are you still harping upon Him? I, for my part carry Voltaire with me. And your . . .



what is his name:—Marko,—Mirko? The little fellow's grown, I wager, into a strapping bridegroom.

MOTHER

So he has, with the help of God.

PHYSICIAN

And then . . . the other? The bio-anatomical-morphophysiological wonder? Pardon the heartless phrases of science!

STEVAN

Still living.

PHYSICIAN

On this farm? Still hidden in the little stall? [*An acquiescent silence. PHYSICIAN paces up and down with huge strides, then remains standing close in front of STEVAN.*] Stevan Milic, you are the head of a family and a big farm, a councillor of the town, one of the gentry, and even if this blueblood talk is all nonsense, you still owe it to your position to be a little broadminded. I know, yes, yes, I know, you believe that the Evil One in person became the fruit of your loins, and that you must forever hide the shame of your fatherhood. Why do you make a deformed half creature more unhappy than need be? Puny man, you who measure all creation in your image, what is there that you do not consider monstrous and deformed?

[*Emphatically.*] Nature, the gambling dreamer, rules everywhere, and fulfills her own divine intention with joy more holy than all your scribbled revelations. Listen to me: [*In the tone of a teacher.*] In the womb on our way from seed to sense we pass through all the stages of plant and animal life. We are one by one and all in one the pollen and the lily, the gnat and the reptile, fish, fowl, and man. Many and many an obstacle must the child outgrow to become a child. Is that not natural? Well, in your wife's body the child was not able to overcome these obstacles which the lower forms imposed on him. For each form wants to be supreme and undying. It is like the ravening ambition of a king. And these earlier forms have left their mark upon this creature which could not fit itself for human life. But neither is it fit for death. Is that not natural?

STEVAN

It may be natural.

PHYSICIAN

[*Gruffly*]: It is very natural. Three out of every hundred children born are warped like yours, though to my recollection this case somewhat exceeds the common. But who can curb the pranks of nature? The universe itself, eternally a child, plays, plays, plays. God and Satan have no hand in the game.

## MOTHER

How can you know that?

## PHYSICIAN

You fools, fools, fools. You cherish the horror here in your house. You are all black with lies, excuses, slyness and reserves. And so little's needed to release you. In the big city, there on the other side of the river, are homes for crippled humans, for monsters of this sort, homes where the unhappy creatures are kept clean and guarded, and allowed to savor their poor twilit lives. The spider has its pleasure, the otter and the eel, why not a half-man? But seriously . . . give me (I have asked you so many times) give me this sport of nature. I will take him to the city, to that home. The journey will not cost you dear. For when science stands to gain I gladly trim my bills.

## STEVAN

That will not do. People would hear of it.

## MOTHER

He would be seen. No night would be black enough to hide such a journey.

## PHYSICIAN

Right! I would be at no pains to hide him.

MOTHER

[*Quickly*]: I'll never, never let him go.

STEVAN

Tell me! When he's entered in this house will his name, which is mine as well, be written down?

PHYSICIAN

Yes, indeed, Stevan Milic.

STEVAN

Never! No! Never!

PHYSICIAN

Oh you . . . [*Swallows the insult.*] Why not?

STEVAN

Sir—we are ashamed.

PHYSICIAN

Did you make the world?

STEVAN

You are a bachelor and a bookworm. You cannot understand us.

PHYSICIAN

You cannot be helped. Never again will I say another word. But be warned! Your neighbors have noses.

STEVAN

My secret is well guarded.

PHYSICIAN

Very well. Then give me the key to his stall. I'm more than a little eager to see how the wonder has grown up. [STEVEN *hesitates.*] Have no fear. I would be no scientist if I could pass by such a wonder. It is years ago but I remember the place well.

STEVEN

[*Gives him the key*]: Take care of yourself when you're with him.

PHYSICIAN

A doctor is a soldier. Many's the giant madman these old bones have tamed. Wait for me.  
[*Exit.*]

STEVEN

Mother, bring a light.  
[MOTHER *goes.*]

PHYSICIAN

[*Sticks his head in at the door*]: Did you give me that key before?

STEVEN

You just took it.

## PHYSICIAN

[*Searching his pockets*]: Did I? My taper . . . my flint. . . . Ah, here it is. Oh, I am getting old. I'm getting old.

## STEVAN

Take care of yourself, Master. It's getting dark.  
[PHYSICIAN *disappears*.]

*Scene Ten*

[*The MOTHER brings the light, then silence.*]

## STEVAN

As soon as the wedding's over I shall go on a pilgrimage to Mount Athos.

## MOTHER

And leave me?

## STEVAN

I will keep nothing. Mirko is old enough. When I return he shall take over the whole place and my position, as my heir.

## MOTHER

And we?

## STEVAN

Will flee . . .



MOTHER

[*Laughs maliciously*]: With him?

STEVAN

Perhaps I'll gather strength enough upon the pilgrimage to talk to Mirko. I must find the strength to tell him everything.

MOTHER

You will leave your son an evil house with pious speeches.

STEVAN

That is true. But sooner or later he must know. I'd rather journey to the monks of Temesvar.

MOTHER

Oh husband! Cowardly as ever. Must your son, who still lives happily, carry the burden you've thrown down?

STEVAN

You are right. I will be silent.

MOTHER

[*Quickly*]: And what's to happen when we die?

STEVAN

We daren't die.

MOTHER

Death might come to me this very hour.

STEVAN

[*Clinging tightly to her*]: No, my companion. I need you—to share my secret.

MOTHER

And I need you for the sake of the child that is your child too. If you were to die and leave me I'd go mad.

STEVAN

We are no longer human. . . .

MOTHER

Because we no longer need each other for each other's sake.

STEVAN

There's no way out.

MOTHER

No. Not even if we both should kill ourselves this hour. Mirko, the unsuspecting, would have to find out everything to-morrow.

STEVAN

[*Agonized*]: I will speak to him to-night.

## MOTHER

Speak . . . keep silent . . . speak. . . .  
To what end? I can see Mirko's face. And she?  
She's a smart one. I hate her already.

## STEVAN

Not even death my refuge. [*Softly, to the mother.*]  
Accursed!

*Scene Eleven*

[A MESSENGER enters.]

## MESSENGER

The old men are assembled in the big house in council. They ask the Gospodar if they are still to wait.

## STEVAN

Let them wait a little longer. But if I take too long, let them begin the meeting. Say that to the Starsina.  
[MESSENGER exits.]

## MOTHER

The joy in your eyes, the joy at not having to be in the house to-night near him, with me . . .

## STEVAN

Yes, joy, joy indeed. I breathe, I breathe relief because I do not have to be here all this evening.

## ACT ONE

35

MOTHER

[*Whimpering*]: Don't leave me alone, Father, take me with you, don't leave me alone here in the house. [STEVEAN *stands rigid for a moment intensely thinking.*] . . . Ah, you are not listening to me.

STEVEAN

[*Very curtly*]: Go now. The doctor. I want to be alone with him.

[MOTHER *goes off slowly rear.* PHYSICIAN *enters.*]

### *Scene Twelve*

PHYSICIAN

[*Shaken*]: It almost makes you turn to God again. Cool-headed as I am, I dripped with sweat. [*Has to sit down.*] Nature is boundless and imagination nothing. Milic, I do not envy you.

STEVEAN

The braggart's trembling now.

PHYSICIAN

You have not seen him since birth?

STEVEAN

A servant brought him up.

## PHYSICIAN

Well! Formerly I still could comprehend it. But now! The ancients believed that at high noon something could spring from quivering nature, formless but visible, horrible and full of majesty, blasting all that crossed it, like the vision of the Whole compressed into a second. . . . Understand me or not,—I saw something like that just now.

## STEVAN

Have you ever spoken of my misfortune to anyone, master?

## PHYSICIAN

Never. That goes without saying. I am a physician.

## STEVAN

[*Painfully*]: I must speak to you, master.

## PHYSICIAN

That I can well imagine.

## STEVAN

[*Struggling for breath*]: Master! He . . . he . . . must go away.

## PHYSICIAN

Of course. And you can thank me for it. Listen. Give me a big wagon with a team of your best horses.

It's a troublesome business, but I'll bring the creature to the place where it belongs. [*Scratches himself under his wig.*] Wonder if they'll accept it? Well, that's my affair.

STEVAN

That's . . . not what I want.

PHYSICIAN

What do you want?

STEVAN

He must go differently.

PHYSICIAN

Differently?

STEVAN

You must have something in your pocket, something . . . that you can't give much of to sick people . . .

PHYSICIAN

Poison?

STEVAN

[*Relieved*]: Poison.

PHYSICIAN

And you want me, just like that, to make away with a creature I did not create; something which breathes,

eager for life? Such an extraordinary, if you will allow me, master prank of nature, into the bargain?

STEVAN

[*Suddenly the humbly stupid peasant*]: Yes, yes, do that!

PHYSICIAN

Sir, I am a physician. I am here to lengthen life.

STEVAN

Poison . . . in . . . his . . . food!

PHYSICIAN

I understand you. So, that's what you want. But we doctors have our superstitions too, and hold with many of Mohammed's maxims. I think, you see, that we are reborn in all the patients we help from life to death. Salaam Aleikum!

[*Exit.*]

STEVAN

[*Screaming*]: Mother! Mother!

### *Scene Thirteen*

[*MOTHER enters swiftly.*]

STEVAN

The Bible! The Bible! [*MOTHER moves the desk with the church calendar to the light.* STEVAN *leaps*



*it through with mad fingers.]* Abraham, Isaac, Abraham, Isaac . . .

MOTHER

[*Totters to him, screaming*]: No! Mother Mary! Not that! Not that!

STEVAN

Yes! That! That! That! [*Savoring the words.*] And you will hold the light.

MOTHER

Agh . . . I carried him without knowing and now . . . woe, woe. . . .

STEVAN

My house must be made over. I must do it for Mirko, for his future and his children. Way for Mirko!

MOTHER

Mirko . . . no! [*Beaming*]: It's him . . . him . . . him I love.

STEVAN

Quiet!

MOTHER

Never seen . . .

## GOAT SONG

STEVAN

You'll see him now.

MOTHER

[*Rigid, slowly*]: Unloved . . .

STEVAN

[*Grabs the gun from the wall*]: Take the lamp.

MOTHER

[*Looks into the distance*]: His little heart . . .  
a human heart.

STEVAN

[*Stamps*]: Keep still!

MOTHER

His blood . . . my blood. . . .

STEVAN

Mine. I gave it. I take it.

MOTHER

[*Tenderly—tenderly*]: Mine . . . Mine! And  
so. . . .

STEVAN

Come! [*Suddenly BABKA appears in the shadows.*]  
Not you! Babka, take the light!

BABKA

[*Quietly*]: I suckled him, but I obey the master.  
[*Holds the lamp high.*]

STEVAN

[*At the door*]: Lord of life! I do not know what your plan is, but I am of it.  
[*Off. BABKA off. MOTHER alone in the dark.*]

MOTHER

Nothing. . . . No remembrance. . . . Never seen. . . . Nothing. . . . Nothing left. Was in me. Now, now . . . his heart . . . beats in mine.  
[*She listens, listens. Awakening.*] The shot! Why is there no shot? Mother of God! . . .  
[*She falls in a faint.*]

*Last Scene*

[*Quick steps outside. STEVAN holds to the doorpost, swaying. BABKA, with the lamp, behind him.*]

STEVAN

The key, the key! The old man left the door unlocked. He's gone, broken loose, escaped! Ah, ah!  
[*Shakes the unconscious mother.*] Mother, do you hear? He's free! Free!

CURTAIN



## ACT TWO



## ACT TWO

[*Scene: Council Room. A low ceiling. In the background a long table stretching all the way across the stage with a corresponding bench behind it. Right, a little table for the presiding officer and the clerk. Left, an oven with an oven bench. The TEN ELDERS have already gathered. Some sit on the long bench with their jugs, some walk back and forth talking, or change their seats. The STARSINA sits at the little table and watches the CLERK cutting a pen. KRASNOKRAJ and MODRYGOR as "Elders" sit on the oven bench talking. The little oil lamp hanging above the presiding officer's table is the only light.*]

### *Scene One*

STARSINA

[*Raps on the table*]: Are we going to wait any longer?

SEVERAL VOICES

[*From the long table*]: The bell in the linden has not rung yet.

[*The conversations continue.*]

## ELDER OF KRASNOKRAJ

Can you remember a meeting when he hasn't kept us waiting?

## ELDER OF MODRYGOR

It is usually unhappiness that keeps us men at home.

## KRASNOKRAJ

He? He hasn't a wish in the world. To-day he betrothed his son to the daughter of the rich man of Kouxelni vrh.

## MODRYGOR

But they say the bride is a trouble-maker.

## KRASNOKRAJ

He was given cattle from the land of the Magyars for breeding. His stock is better than ours.

## MODRYGOR

But it is always suffering from worms and sore feet.

## KRASNOKRAJ

He has cut timber and floated his long logs down our stream to the Danube.

## MODRYGOR

But the merchant from the north still owes him for them.



KRASNOKRAJ

Yes, that is true. There's always a "but" for him. What his right hand wins his left hand loses. Always a curse on the play.

MODRYGOR

Not master enough to my mind. He might be a real master. He has the brains.

KRASNOKRAJ

It is his eyes, I tell you. That's where the trouble lies. He is forever hiding something. A dog hides the stolen bone. He has an evil treasure hidden somewhere.

MODRYGOR

Eyes that roam;—trouble at home.

KRASNOKRAJ

Things are not going too well for us, either. All this trouble these last years with the landless and the returning emigrants. The flies settle thickly on the carcass.

MODRYGOR

We will take council upon that to-day.

KRASNOKRAJ

You can't go peacefully cross-country any more. Out of the grainfield, out from behind tree shadows, out

of the ditches, suddenly you see an unknown face with its eager, hungry eyes. Eh! An honest man shudders at all the shadowy dancers.

### MODRYGOR

The Turk has grown sleepy. We who were once weak, miserable, and oppressed by him are grown great. But the children of the men who had to fear his vengeance, the exiles and the refugees, have also smelt the green tang of our air. They have a claim on it.

### KRASNOKRAJ

If they turn against Mahomet, they will turn against us. We are too well off. Stevan Milic's fists are much too soft.

### MODRYGOR

He has troubles enough in his own precinct. His own people, so they say, don't stand behind him.

### ELDER OF MEDEGYA

[*Coming over to the others*]: Have you heard the strange things our brother of Pozar has been telling us? In their town a dead man goes about sucking the blood of the living in the night. Next morning there is a little mark no larger than a mole on the breasts of those he attacks. (The Emperor has sent

out a commission.) They pricked the corpse with flowering thorn. Fresh red blood burst from the heart, the eyes glowed and there was no stench to the flesh.

KRASNOKRAJ

Yes, witches and vampires are breeding. A werewolf from the mountains of Woljo . . . has . . .  
[*Distant bell rings.*]

STARSINA

[*Raps three times*]: The meeting will begin. [*All take their places.*] Clerk, read the order of the day.

CLERK

[*Reads*]: The business of this evening's meeting, ad punctum, primum, et ultimum is as follows: The case of the landless, the returned natives and vagabonds, the question being whether they shall be ordered on or allowed to settle, or what legal measures shall be taken. Further, audience is to be given to three of their members, men whom they have chosen as spokesmen, to wit: the American who does not know his father's name, Teiterlik, a tumbler and acrobat, and finally the Jew, Reb Feiwel, born here. The said three persons are outside the door. Finally a vote and decision on the above mentioned case.

[*Sits.*]

## STARSINA

Has anyone an objection to this procedure? [*Silence.*] To the procedure? [*Silence.*] You elders know that it has been unsafe for a year and a day to travel on the streets, paths, and by-roads leading from village to village. When the herdsman goes his rounds of a morning it is not uncommon for him to come on a cold corpse by the hedgerow. It is not the fox that steals all the fowl, nor the hawk that lifts all the lambs from the fold. We know the guilty persons well. The Turkish Bassa in his mercy and wisdom has appointed honorable and well born men of our race for our governors, and the peasants no longer pay tribute to the turban, but to a Christian landowner. Well we know the men who sneak in to poison their minds. Let us decide wisely so as not to lose the good will of the peasants. And now I propose that we let in the men who wait outside the door. [*All the ELDERS raise their hands in approval.*] Let them in.  
[CLERK off.]

*Scene Two*

[*The AMERICAN, TEITERLIK, and FEIWEL enter; the CLERK comes back to his former place. The AMERICAN is pockmarked, dressed in ragged farm clothes with long leather boots and a sombrero. TEITERLIK has one upstanding clown's curl on his otherwise bald head, his nose is snub, eaten away,*

*his body is emaciated in his stage tights, with one red, one yellow leg. FEIWEL has a full head, red cheeks, kaftan, and fur cap. All three bow before the STARSINA and the ELDERS, the AMERICAN slightly, the ROPE-WALKER and the JEW to the ground.]*

STARSINA

The fool speaks first.

TEITERLIK

*[Makes a few forced, stiff, pirouetting steps]:* Highly honored, excellent, and landed sirs! The world is big, the heart little; a little mill of flesh that grinds and grinds yet never grinds out the last grain of our hope.

FEIWEL

*[Maliciously]:* He he! He he!

TEITERLIK

There are many cities. There is London, and the Thames flows through it, the stream from which the fogs come and where the state drowns criminals and heretics. Then there is Vienna with its Prater. There the Emperor rides in a golden wagon and ten thousand riders follow him. And Naples, too, known awhile back as Babylon, which is another city than Lisbon. In this here Naples is the mountain called Vesuvius, the chimney of hell . . .

## FEIWEL

Oi, the stupid. In the newspapers I read of that mountain.

## AMERICAN

Pah, you never swallowed salt water, that's why your tongue wags so fast.

## STARSINA

Let the tumbler talk.

## TEITERLIK

Worshipful landowners. You landed gentlemen! I have been in all these cities and a thousand cities, markets, and towns more, good and bad. We always halted, whether I was master or apprenticed to the troupe, at the edge of the town where the commons are gray and shaggy like the pelt of an old dog. On Sunday, at sunset, the silver would rain on our plates, but on weekdays we often went to sleep without a bite. Of course later on I was not alone, for I found my woman—but in my trade you can't enjoy the women much. It weakens supple joints and makes the eyes see the tight-rope double and triple. Many's the comrades I lost that couldn't say no to them.

## AMERICAN

Make it shorter, man.

TEITERLIK

How fine it all is when you're young. You get up early from under the leaves—a-cracking your joints, and sling a stone at the sun. But suddenly, worshipful landowners, this feeling, this awful feeling, comes over you. When your joints are too stiff for the job, you feel the shame of smirking and bowing, and—not being able to sit at a Christian table. At night the cough gnaws at your back like a wolf and you can knock your heart out at the hospital and there's no welcome for you. Yes, the pain was there and would not let go. And I thought of my old folks and how they tilled their fields in this place, and I called to mind the doorstep of their home, here, where as a little boy I used to sit. A piece of land—for the love of God! It is like sleep to the weary. Weary am I, and those with me are weary. You worshipful landowners, you are rich, with many unused acres, hills and bottomlands that you leave fallow. Give us, the children who have come back—give us of your plenty. [*Softly.*] We are weary.

FEIWEL

[*Very loudly, to the STARSINA*]: I am the Jew Feiweel. I should think you know that. Who does not know me?

AMERICAN

[*Pushes him away*]: No one asked you to speak.

FEIWEL

And who asked you to speak?

STARSINA

The Jew comes last.

FEIWEL

[*With a deliberate, ironical gesture of mouth and hand*]: Don't I know it.

AMERICAN

Mesch'schurs and Señores. America is a wonderful country. It is called the new world and the men there talk little. Therefore, I will talk briefly but to the point. Across the great water, there was a war between the new men and the old English. The new men,—(I fought on their side),—won. And that is well. Their land is monstrous, huge. The Indians, brave fighters, were conquered by the firewater. The new men were not born there but came from the whole world, to settle inland and on the coast. They are free and obey no one. The stranger knocks at the block-house at night and the head of the house asks him no questions about who, whither, or whence, but pushes him up a chair to the fire and they smoke great cigars, these self-reliant souls. No man thinks himself better than the rest, and the son of the hanged and the daughter of the whore have nothing to fear



there. They know nothing of high and low, land-owners and landless men. The government gives away land with both hands to all men, and they grow grain, cut timber, pasture flocks, become rich, and no one is downtrodden.

I was one of them, and I did well. Then this cursed sneaking homesickness came over me, and now I have come back here and am ashamed to name my father's name. I who was rich lie with the beggars, a beggar myself, with hate in my heart. I tell you this so you may act like the Americans, and put aside your greed and give each of your countrymen some of the waste land. Then a new race may grow here, rich in experience and goods, and no one live in misery. We that have nothing to eat and no place to sleep have a claim on you, you farmers! Beware of our hatred!

MURMUR OF THE ELDERS

Who dares threaten us?

AMERICAN

I. I who have travelled far and know the world much better than you left-behinds. If you knew anything of business, you would not let new sources of revenue escape you.

TEITERLIK

See our weariness! Only a patch of ground and place for the beggar's hut.

FEIWEL

[*Stepping before the table, fumbles the question*]:  
I?

STARSINA

[*Contemptuously*]: Jew!

FEIWEL

[*Waving his hands about for silence*]: Ssh now!—  
Am I or am I not the important person that I am?  
Do I belong with these beggars here, with whom I belong?  
Who brings the women needles, thread, yarn, wool, buttons, cotton, handkerchiefs, kerchief silks?  
Who buys the toys for the children, the tools you need for house and kitchen, wick lamps, and oiled paper?  
Who brings your mousetraps, bracelets, pipes? Who travels into the world for you? Who runs the life out of his body for love of you? Who brings you the latest news and gossip? But for me who would know that in France they have kicked out their king and that the Messiah will arise there? The *Turks* are a good people. The Jews may live among them. They can come home Erev Shabbos and light their candles without fear. But *you*! I was born here, as my father, Olav Hasholom, was born here. But my grandchildren yet will have to live with the gallows-birds. That's you! You! You!

*Scene Three*

[*STEVAN enters quickly. He carries the gun in his hand. Three of the elders rise and the STARSINA leaves his place.*]

FEIWEL

[*Resigned*]: May a Jew only say two words?

STEVAN

[*Taking the STARSINA's place*]: Clerk, send a rider after the Physician, to catch up with his wagon outside the city. Tell him I want him to come back.  
[*CLERK off. STEVAN stares into the air, long. The ELDERS shake their heads and mutter.*]

ELDERS

What is the matter with him?

STEVAN

[*To the three delegates*]: You?

TEITERLIK

[*Bows low, his arms crossed*]: Land, Excellency, a bit of land from your overflow, for us, the miserable, who have come home. It's time to settle down and be human.

## AMERICAN

[*Gruffly*]: Rich man! Give of your waste land to the beggars. Give them their share. They're sturdy people. It's not a charity, but an investment.

## STEVAN

How many are you?

## FEIWEL

Excellence, I have the count. In round numbers, four hundred: men, women, children, Jew, Gipsy, and Christian.

## STEVAN

What do the Elders say?

## KRASNOKRAJ

Never ground and land to the worthless.

## MODRYGOR

We must weigh the matter.

## STEVAN

[*In an uncontrollable outburst of rage*]: Nothing's to be weighed. [*He presses toward the three. Trembling, they retreat.*] Damn you! Have you human faces? No, not human faces.

Ha, pockmarks, nose, missing teeth, popeyes, fox-

beard. The face of the ageless, shrewd, goatlike ape; his face, the face that must stay hidden. There, there's where it broke loose. Our ancestors covered up their secret sin, but now, no cloth is thick enough to smother it, and it walks abroad.

Oh, you sons of the blood sin, would you settle among us to whom the land belongs, who have bettered and built it? Among us sons of light, us? By day and by night shall these scarecrows surround us in church and inn? Do you want to walk upright or on all fours among us? Away, away! Go, go!

KRASNOKRAJ

I don't understand all the Gospodar is saying there, but one thing is true. You are not peasants and never will be, for none of you is fit to till, lazy as you are, and practised in nothing but thieving. You're neither clean nor decent, just a vain and worthless lot who want to hurt your betters, and that's us.

MODRYGOR

Do not be too hasty.

TEITERLIK

I have worked much, in danger of my life, to satisfy your love of wonders. None of you graybeards has dared as much as I, no, not if there's a king among you.

## AMERICAN

Sir! Over there I was one of you! And over there a man who throws insults at decent men is dead a long time.

[CLERK *enters again.*]

## FEIWEL

[*Persuading the ELDERS, vehemently*]: Can't you see it? Milic is drunk!

## STEVAN

[*In a mighty voice*]: Away. Out of our country by to-morrow. Let no landless man show himself here after three days' time. Ten pair of bloodhounds will track on you. And those who resist will be tied to a tree and flogged.

## A FEW VOICES

We're here too. This is not decided on.

## STEVAN

It has been ordered. Clerk, write the order. Who dares to rise, to stir? Still I am I! I am not yet beaten. Write the order!

## AMERICAN

Man! Such an order befits no one but the Pasha of the Kaimakamluks. Where shall we poor devils go?

STEVEN

To the mines, to the harbors, to foreign lands. Only let me be free again. [*Slowly.*] Oh you outcasts who call nothing your own, if you knew how happy you are. [*Beside himself, swings the gun to hit the three.*] Away with you.

[*ELDERS, near the madman in great excitement.*]

*Scene Four*

[*Enter BABKA with a lantern. She stands at the door.*]

STEVEN

[*Screams to her*]: Where?

BABKA

Nowhere.

STEVEN

No trace?

BABKA

None!

STEVEN

Speak!

BABKA

Looked . . . nothing.

STEVAN

Screams?

BABKA

None! Vanished!

STEVAN

With whose aid?

BABKA

The devil's!

STEVAN

Elders! The meeting is over. I must go hunting.  
[STEVAN *tears the lantern out of BABKA's hand and runs off.*]

ELDERS

[*Scared, huddled, confusedly*]: He is mad.

CURTAIN



## ACT THREE



## ACT THREE

### *Scene One*

*[Garden of a decayed inn. Left a shed which serves as a residence and inn. Right front a table surrounded by benches, further to the back a second, wholly worm-eaten table without a bench. In the distance, rear, screened by trees and shrubbery, the glare of campfires and many shadows moving here and there. Distant, thin music and the stamping of feet on the dance-floor. A full moon.]*

*In the foreground, surrounded by a crowd of children and listeners among them fifteen year old KRUNA, stands white-bearded BOGOBOJ. At the table front, alone, sits JUVAN, the student.]*

### BOGOBOJ

*[His eyes closed, as if in a trance]:* On these clear moonlit nights they ride over the backs of the hills and lie on the ledges, the summits, the plateaus. Their sheep-boys, shepherds, and milk-maids, and herdsmen roam with them and guard the flocks. But the serving folk are not immortal like them. They only live a thousand years. The animals they herd are mostly

roe and goats; no matter how high they climb and how wildly they frolic they never stray off to the haunts of men.

KRUNA

Why do they have only goats, father?

BOGOBOJ

They live on goatsmilk. But what they prepare in their big cauldrons when the mountain fires burn, that no one knows.

KRUNA

Will they ever come back again?

BOGOBOJ

Oh, their hearts are trembling now with the joy of return. They hug the trees in monstrous glee and they listen to the pulsing sap of the pine. They kiss the hardy blossoms of the mountain-tops and feel bittersweet on their lips the taste of their own immortality. With loving hands they fondle the fur of the sacred untamed herds. The goats bleat and they answer the song from the depths of their souls. [*Weaving his head rhythmically.*] I hear in the wind the song of the goats.

KRUNA

And mortals?

BOGOBOJ

Some of them have come down from the hills and loved a mortal. So they have children, outposts, in many places. And in their eyes a diamond burns.  
[To JUVAN.] Hear, son of the sorceress.

KEUNA

And have they messengers?

BOGOBOJ

The devils who serve them. [To JUVAN.] Hear, son of the sorceress.

JUVAN

[*Beating his fist wildly on the table*]: Don't call me that, old idiot. The midwife was my mother. Not even the money for her coffin could her magic win her.

BOGOBOJ

And your father, unbeliever?

JUVAN

I do not know my father. You know that.

BOGOBOJ

Indeed you do not know your father, son of the sorceress.

JUVAN

Be still! General of the billygoats. You're crazy.

## GOAT SONG

KRUNA

Don't cross the old man. He is a prophet.

JUVAN

A gabbler, that's what he is.

BOGOBOJ

You cannot cross me, student. I alone know your mission.

JUVAN

[*Carried away, to himself*]: Mission? I, of all men in that monstrous, strange city the lowest? Bed on the benches. Winter. Women gliding by. They and their rustling, God rot them. Sitting at the oven in the classroom, jealous of those seated closer, hearing nothing in my hunger and exhaustion. Cheekbones jutting. Hammering Greek into flabby rich children for one gulden a month. . . . No! That was not all. They learned to know *me*. . . . And now I am here. Among you. Among you.

BOGOBOJ

It was ordained that you should come.

KRUNA

Once they chose a man like you.

A VERY OLD WOMAN

"And purple the slippers of our Prince."

AN OLD MAN

Strong youth, you, a writer and a reader, are the man to help us.

KRUNA

[*Comes closer to the table*]: Why do you stay with us?

JUVAN

[*After a pause*]: Because I hate the others and you mean nothing to me. I hate them. Perhaps I hate you too.

KRUNA

You always sit apart.

JUVAN

Lucky for you. I'd spoil your fun.

KRUNA

You haven't had much fun, have you?

JUVAN

[*Slowly, simply*]: True. Perhaps I've only had one joy in all my life, the time I saw a forest burn . . .

BOGOBOJ

[*Softly*]: Rulers of our people. He is your son.

JUVAN

[*To himself*]: And that's no lie. [*Aloud.*] And why should I not sit apart? The biggest fools among you are gone to the potato diggers to beg them for a bit of land. Soon you will all be farmers and farmers' women, stingy eaters of prune mash and lovers of stuffy rooms. Soon you will have forgotten how to steal.

[*Spits.*]

A MAN

Spit at us, do you? What do you want?

JUVAN

I want nothing. Nothing of you, nothing of myself. Only to lie on a cliff, smoking, staring at the treetops, drinking.

BOGOBOJ

[*Softly*]: Empty must be the jar into which they pour their milk. [JUVAN *laughs.*]

KRUNA

Why do you laugh, student?

JUVAN

That is my greatest talent. I can laugh because I'm bored. You bore me. Perhaps that's why I stay with you.



BOGOBOJ

That is a lie, you crafty one. Know that you wait.

JUVAN

[*Struck*]: I wait! Yes! Since childhood! I wait.

BOGOBOJ

And they have ordained . . .

JUVAN

Innkeeper! Ljuben!

BOGOBOJ

. . . they are agreed.

JUVAN

[*Loudly*]: Innkeeper! Ljuben!

BOGOBOJ

And it shall come to pass. . . .

JUVAN

[*Bellows*]: Innkeeper!

BOGOBOJ

And it must come . . .

JUVAN

[*Sharply, excited*]: What?

## GOAT SONG

BOGOBOJ

You know.

JUVAN

[*Jumping up*]: Then woe. . . . [INNKEEPER enters, JUVAN laughs.] Woe to the innkeeper.

INNKEEPER

Hey?

JUVAN

A bottle.

INNKEEPER

Money first . . . you know that.

JUVAN

[*Throws down three silver gulden*]: Dog! [INNKEEPER whistles through his teeth.] Just for that you'll have to crawl for it. [INNKEEPER off hastily. JUVAN declaims gravely]:

If I've not a farthing

I'll ride in a coach

And if I've a million

I'll starve with the pack.

[INNKEEPER brings the bottle.]

*Scene Two*

[TEITERLIK, the AMERICAN, FEIWEL. Behind them a crowd of motley vagabonds. BOGOBOJ and his audience go to meet them.]

AMERICAN

All's lost, you people.

CHORUS

Curse them. Curse them!

AMERICAN

Your packs and beggar's traps up on the wagons quickly.

YOUNG MAN

Why do we yield?

OLD MAN

The powderhorn hangs by their hearthstones.

AMERICAN

To-morrow they will drive us from our home land with their dogs.

JUVAN

Good! That's right!

CHORUS

Where can we go?

TEITERLIK

Who's playing still and dancing? [*Distant bass rhythms stop.*] You poor things! We poor things! Whither to-morrow?

## GOAT SONG

## CHORUS

Whither to-morrow? No one to lead us—no one to help us.

## FEIWEL

What's that? No one leads? No one helps? I made a speech for you before the council. You should have heard me. They ought to write my speech down and put it in the papers. Hey, Mr. Ropedancer? Hey, Mr. American? How was my speech? What kind of lawyer am I? [*To the many who now come from the dance floor.*] All honor, says I to the needy and they shook their fists in my face and their knives, and still I spoke on for your rights.

## AMERICAN

That's a lie, man.

## FEIWEL

[*Softly*]: Ssh, Mr. American, that's politics! [*Loudly*.] And now I speak to you! I have connections in the highest circles. The king of Sweden is my friend. I'll write him a petition. Sure! I'm a Jew, and brave. Why are you frightened? You are so many? Why do you let yourselves be chased? Is man an animal?

[*He has grown moody.*]

## JUVAN

[*Very loudly*]: Light on the table, Ljuben!

FEIWEL

[*Suddenly breaks off, afraid*]: Always at your service.

[*Dives into the crowd.*]

TEITERLIK

[*To JUVAN*]: You in the laced coat and scholar's cap, help us now.

AMERICAN

You didn't get your learning in a Sunday school.

TEITERLIK

You are learned. They will fear you.

JUVAN

[*Turns brusquely*]: What do you want?

AMERICAN

To have you talk to them.

JUVAN

I? With them? With them? It bores me.

TEITERLIK

Beg him, the Gospodar, in our behalf.

## GOAT SONG

JUVAN

[*Slowly, sharply*]: It bores me.

[INNKEEPER *lights a lamp.*]

AMERICAN

Ask them to give us more time.

JUVAN

You were born upon this land but there's no land left for you.

TEITERLIK

Think of the children wandering forever; no church, no teaching!

JUVAN

You teach them to dance on the tightrope and stand on their heads.

AMERICAN

Comrade! Why talk like that? Something must be done. You can help. I'll help too.

JUVAN

I will help you if the devil helps you.  
[BOGOBOJ *murmurs strange words.*]

AMERICAN

Well at least give us some advice, man, if you're so brainy.

## JUVAN

[*Almost phlegmatic*]: Advice enough. Steal. Steal ducks, pigs, calves, but don't forget the iron things you kill with. And do you want some fine advice? Disguise yourselves as mendicant monks; steal in, ruin the women, pervert the children. Pretend you're doctors, give out tinctures, sell henbane juice as a love-philtre; or pour brandy on their open wounds. [*Suddenly in earnest.*] And here's the best advice of all. Rip the big limbs from off the trees, strip them, and dip them in pitch.

## AMERICAN

I'll follow that last advice, man!

## FEIWEL

[*Close to JUVAN's ear*]: I know a good place. Mehmet Muchlis in the town. He rents weapons. [JUVAN brusquely turns his back on them all.]

## BOGOBOJ

[*Rising*]: Will you be awake when the hour comes, son of the unknown father?

## JUVAN

[*Over his shoulder*]: You know I sleep only by day. [*The crowd withdraws to the rear.*]

*Scene Three*

[STANJA and MIRKO enter.]

MIRKO

This is damned unreasonable, Stanjoschka! What are these vagabonds to us? They own nothing, they are dirty, they do not go to communion. Our fathers are fighting them. Let's go back.

STANJA

But I don't like your friends on the dancing green tinkling their silver chains.

MIRKO

How can you talk so? Duko Petkovic is there: he was one of the Emperor's Hussars at Temesvar for a whole year, and his old man has put by a good ten thousand. And young Trifunovic who inherited the bakery and knows the great Pasha. [STANJA's expression stops him in midsentence.] You cat! You woman! I know you want to take my friends from me; comrades I've known since I was a child, who understand me if I so much as blink at them.

MIRKO

Woe to me that I am in love with you, sniffing the odor of your body like a hound. I love, so I must bend to you, you cold one.



## ACT THREE

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STANJA

Go to your friends.

MIRKO

I can't because you tell me to. But if I weren't such a coward . . . Jesus—Jesus. I would leave you standing here.

STANJA

But I am tired. I want to sit down.

MIRKO

That table with the candle! No . . . there's a man sitting there.

STANJA

The table's all right. Come.

MIRKO

A man is sitting there, I told you.

STANJA

What does it matter? Aren't you my betrothed? Can't you protect me?

MIRKO

[*Whimpering*]: Oh . . . I don't want to . . . oh!

## STANJA

Don't stand there looking stupid. Come.  
[Both go to JUVAN's table.]

## MIRKO

[*Very stiffly*]: We came along the road very late.  
Hm . . . hm . . . [JUVAN *stares at him in silent calm.*] You will allow us . . . [JUVAN *stares, without answering, at MIRKO. MIRKO confused.*] We don't disturb you?

## JUVAN

[*After a pause*]: This is an inn for all comers.  
And you are noble guests such as do not come every day.

## MIRKO

[*Vaguely oppressed, to STANJA*]: Come away!  
[JUVAN *moves to one side, MIRKO and STANJA sit so that STANJA is behind the light, with a man on either side of her and almost in darkness. MIRKO whispers.*]  
His scholar's cap and laced coat! Is it the student?

## STANJA

He? I never saw him before.

## MIRKO

[*To himself*]: Suppose she's lying!

MIRKO

[*To JUVAN*]: We're here because we lost our way, brother. You can't help roaming about, festival time.

JUVAN

Now none of your silly tricks, Mirko Milic.

MIRKO

He knows me! Damn it!

[*In flattered tones, to STANJA.*] I'm not the Gospodar's son for nothing!

[*To JUVAN*]: And now! We'll have a drink together! [*Takes coins from his pocket.*] I'll treat.

JUVAN

One minute, friend! Who sat here first? I! Therefore I am the host, the land owner, the king, and you are guests. You are my guests! He! Ho! Ljuben!

MIRKO

Allow me——

[*INNKEEPER comes.*]

JUVAN

Two of the same!

[*INNKEEPER off.*]

## GOAT SONG

MIRKO

Allow me, and forgive me. You are respectable, a follower of the arts, with your laced coat, but . . .

JUVAN

But . . .

MIRKO

Poor! Anyone can see that. You belong to the crowd over there by the fires. [*Enter INNKEEPER with two bottles. MIRKO counts the coins into his own hand ringingly.*] You'd just as soon have me pay, wouldn't you?

JUVAN

[*Takes MIRKO's hand as it lies on the table and closes it*]: Don't worry. Even if it's stolen my money's good. [*To the INNKEEPER.*] The ruby glasses, you ass, for guests like these.

INNKEEPER

Knew that.

MIRKO

I meant no offense.

JUVAN

No matter. [*INNKEEPER places Bohemian glasses on the table.*] These glasses are stolen, too.

STANJA

You're an awkward boor. You'll never do anything but shame me. You can learn from him what manners are.

MIRKO

[*In hurt tones*]: Stanjoschka, you!

[JUVAN *pours.*]

STANJA

[*Slightly exaggerated*]: I like this place. Air that tastes like honey floats down from the hills. The new mown hay has a different smell than the dry grass heaped in your meadows.

[*She laughs up the scale.*]

JUVAN

[*Gravely*]: Why are you cooing, daughter of the rich?

STANJA

I laugh at the burning moths. At the bats up there I laugh . . .

MIRKO

[*Between his teeth*]: You've found your tongue, silent one!

STANJA

If I was silent with you, I speak now, grumbler, and laugh.

## GOAT SONG

JUVAN

I know well how to laugh. But I am never merry.

STANJA

I drink to the man who is never merry, to make him so.

JUVAN

[*Quietly*]: Do not touch my glass, rich woman.

MIRKO

Shameless . . . you see? Shameless . . .

STANJA

Do what you like! [*Drains her glass, laughing.*] It pleases me to sit between two men, one a well brought up son who sees only the things he's meant to see, and the other you, you poacher laced in the laced coat. [*Pointing to the background.*] And all these motley ragged men; they please me, too.

JUVAN

The same men, daughter of the rich, that you are going to chase out with your dogs tomorrow.

STANJA

That shall not be. I say so.

## ACT THREE

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JUVAN

[*Emphatically*]: It shall be—I say so. It shall be your chase until they turn on you. Then let it turn again.

MIRKO

[*Rises*]: Stanja, come now. We're going.

STANJA

Go if you like. You can't order me. I'm still free.

MIRKO

[*Sits*]: You don't know what you're doing. You're playing with fire.

JUVAN

Mirko Milic, drink. Drink, my guest!

MIRKO

That I will do, student, I am not afraid.  
[*Drinks two glasses full, one after the other.*]

STANJA

Don't drink so much. You know you cannot stand it, mother's boy!

[*MIRKO groans.*]

JUVAN

Laugh at her, Milic, she's nothing but a woman!

MIRKO

[*Speaking thickly*]: Can't . . . think . . .  
any more. . . .

JUVAN

Why do you look at me so, bride?

STANJA

Did I look at you? Well, I didn't see you then.

JUVAN

What are you thinking?

STANJA

I was just thinking I hate blondes and like the  
swarthy lads. [MIRKO *shatters his glass*]: Fool!

JUVAN

[*Gravely*]: A guest's privilege.

[*To STANJA.*] You are mistaken, girl, I am your  
enemy.

STANJA

If you only were.

JUVAN

You are right. I used too big a word. I do not  
love possession, but I love to steal possessions. I do  
not love the booty, but I love to fling it from me.

STANJA

Those who know the merchant's fingers bless the rob-  
ber's hand.



JUVAN

[*Leans toward her.*] You're beautiful enough.

STANJA

Enemy!

JUVAN

With your glistening hair.

STANJA

[*In quiet triumph*]: Enemy!

JUVAN

I am no bed-robber.

MIRKO

[*Starting up in mad rage*]: Ah! Ah! Ah! You insulted my betrothed. Draw your knife.

[*Stands with his knife raised.*]

JUVAN

[*Leisurely*]: I have not even touched your betrothed, Mirko Milic.

MIRKO

Whether you have or haven't, come on!

JUVAN

Go your way! Too early yet for bloodshed.

*Scene Four*

[TEITERLIK, AMERICAN, FEIWEL, KRUNA, *the crowd*,  
*group about the three.*]

## VOICES

The son of the Gospodar. The little fellow. They're  
going to fight . . .

## MIRKO

Ah! Everything is over now. If you live, I must  
take her like a beggar at your hands. So you must  
die, die, because I love her. Come on!

## JUVAN

Is it your will, daughter of the rich? Shall we spill  
blood?

## STANJA

It is my will. And may you fall.

## JUVAN

Come on, then, Mirko Milic! The moon is shining  
for us.

[*Opens his knife. Brilliant growing moonlight. Con-*  
*fusion of voices dies down. MIRKO and JUVAN stand*  
*in position with blades bared.*]

*Scene Five*

*[Lightening, then quick darkening of the stage. Total darkness for the space of three pulse-beats. Equally quick lighting of the stage. It seems as though a giant shadow had passed above them. Endless pause of panic-stricken numbness. Everyone—each petrified in a different attitude, looks in a different direction. Only the knife falls from JUVAN'S hand as he stands in a listening attitude as if someone had called him. At the sound the paralysis breaks into a nameless, hysterical confession.]*

MIRKO

*[In the foreground, his knife still raised]:* Come! Or I'll kill you.

*[Tears STANJA away with him. Fluttering laugh of fear from the crowd. It is repeated on all hands.]*

FEIWEL

Shma Ysroel!

TEITERLIK

Did you . . . oh, oh, oh . . . did you see the shadow?

CRIES

We saw! . . . We didn't see.

AMERICAN

Quiet, children. The shadow won't eat you.

## GOAT SONG

## FIRST VOICE

I saw him. It was a man.

## SECOND VOICE

It was no man.

## THIRD VOICE

A goat . . . a giant goat.

## FOURTH VOICE

No, a man!

## FIFTH VOICE

Where did he go? The goat, the goat!

## SIXTH VOICE

Turning handsprings down the road.

## TEITERLIK

No, no . . . into the house!

*Scene Six*

[*The INNKEEPER rushes out of the house howling, his eyes wild, sinks on his knees.*]

## INNKEEPER

Holy Mary, pray for us! Holy Anna, pray for us!  
Holy Joseph, pray for us!

## AMERICAN

[*Shakes him*]: Speak, Ljuben! Calm yourself! What did you see?

## INNKEEPER

Holy Chrysostome, pray for us! Holy Athanasius, pray for us! Cyril and Methodius, intercede for us!

## AMERICAN

[*Shakes him wildly*]: Man alive—what's the matter?

## INNKEEPER

[*Stumbling over his words*]: Beneficent hermits, pray for us! Oh he . . . oh it. . . .  
[*Falls unconscious.*]

*Scene Seven*

[*Whitebearded BOGOBOJ in a white, fantastically mysterious robe, hair and beard decorated with flowers, enters. He carries panpipes in his hand.*]

## BOGOBOJ

The terror has been sent to us. They send the terror before them. I slept, but now I am awake. The terror has been sent to us. Where is their son, where is he?

[*Blows on the pipes. JUVAN rouses with a fearful*

*start and runs through the avenue of frightened people to the house.]*

TEITERLIK

He is a dead man now.

AMERICAN

Great God! What courage!

KRUNA

[*Enchanted*]: Juvan, our leader! Now he begins to live!

[*Long pause of listening suspense. A shrill, penetrating laugh in the crowd.*]

FEIWEL

Stop that laughing, God of my Fathers!

BOGOBOJ

Gather, children, gather and prepare! They will command you. The son is with the messenger. Gather!

[*He blows on the pipes.*]

### *Scene Eight*

[JUVAN, *deadly pale, steps out of the door. Closes it with widespread arms.*]

JUVAN

The hour has struck. Seize whatever weapons you can find; pitchforks, axes, knives, and fire.

Juvan, the man of many conspiracies, the son of this mountain soil, commands you.

The doom of the rich is at hand. For he has come to us—the one who has been denied. He has escaped. Now has the secret given itself into my hands.

CURTAIN





## ACT FOUR



## ACT FOUR

*[Scene: Interior of a wooden village church: Greek Orthodox. The room is dominated by the Ikonostas, the gay wall of gold, silver, and colored pictures which guards the holy of holies. The Ikonostas is broken by two small side doors, and the big central door, called the "royal gate." These three doors, used during the sacred performance for the exits and entrances of the priests and diakons, are now shut. A few scattered tapers are burning.]*

### *Scene One*

*[Front stage before the Ikonostas, JUVAN and the PRIEST. Two armed REVOLUTIONARIES stand guard at the church door.]*

#### PRIEST

*[His teeth chattering]:* The last day! The high altar no longer protects, nor the gracious place of the communion. Let me go. Let me die outside.

#### JUVAN

*[Points to the royal gate]:* Did you see him in there?

## GOAT SONG

PRIEST

See? Him? Did I dare to look at him? Eh, eh!  
He laughs at his bonds, the shaggy one.

JUVAN

And do you know who he is?

PRIEST

Do not say his name! Do not name him! You  
. . . you! Let me out! Let me out!

JUVAN

So you do not doubt? You believe he is what he  
is?

PRIEST

I believe in the death of the world. Leave me.

JUVAN

[*Takes him by the throat*]: If you believe, then  
name his name.

PRIEST

[*Groaningly*]: His given names uprising, murder, arson, and heresy . . .

JUVAN

[*Lets him go*]: Go!

PRIEST

[*Quickly takes the big Bible and a silver paten out of hiding*]: I want to save the holy vessels.

JUVAN

[*Knocks the two things out of the PRIEST's hand with his weapon*]: Jewels, gold and silver, those are what you want to save, my shrewd priest.

PRIEST

[*Running off*]: I believe it is he. I believe!

*Scene Two*

[*TEITERLIK comes in drunk, clad half in a remarkable uniform, half in his clown's costume.*]

TEITERLIK

Captain! . . . A clean sweep! . . . Captain! We're in clover! We wallow in brandy in the barrooms. Beg to announce army growing. Serfs, tenants, yeomen, farmhands, all with us. The charcoal burners from the wood, the smugglers, and many bearded strangers forming gangs. Beg to announce sky is red. You're to be king, so they say. And I get promotion, too, 'if doing and dying's deserving. Captain, I'll make a good lieutenant. I'll walk before

them on my hands. Think I'm not young enough?  
Look.

*[Tries to turn a Catherine wheel.]*

JUVAN

You shall be lieutenant as long as you are drunk.  
But as soon as I see you sober, you're going to be shot.

TEITERLIK

Orders're orders.

JUVAN

How big is the army, lieutenant?

TEITERLIK

A thousand of us, they say. And all those weapons!  
Swords, guns, and one little cannon that won't shoot.  
*[He falls on his knees and crosses himself.]* The one  
in there has brought the weapons here by magic.

### *Scene Three*

*[FEIWEL enters stormily.]*

FEIWEL

Well, Mr. General, now look here! *[To himself:]*  
. . . Me in a church! *[To JUVAN.]* Why are  
you looking at me so?

JUVAN

Insolence! You are not my equal to speak to me so!

FEIWEL

Ts, ts. Christian stays Christian. Fine revolutionaries, the Goyim. Give them a sabre and they strut around and play soldiers.

JUVAN

Your news!

FEIWEL

Well, Mr. General, I thought this was to be the hour of justice and freedom. But what must I see? Murder, Mr. General! Everywhere the drunkards, the fanatics, are murdering. Nobody resisting, yet they murder. Blood of men, Mr. General, human blood, flowing under the doors, over the threshold, down the steps. . . . "Oh woe, woe to us!" everywhere in my ears. You must stop it, you must order them back. I cannot see blood. And he in there—if he really is in there—what would he want that for?

JUVAN

Jew! Do you know why you are the lowest of all men?

FEIWEL

Everyone has a different reason.

JUVAN

Because you cannot understand bloodlust.

FEIWEL

Look at that. I thought that was what made us the chosen people!

*Scene Four*

[AMERICAN enters.]

AMERICAN

Man, I put order in that crowd. Divided and drilled them in squads, like I learnt to in war, and each has its orders. The farms to the southward are all blazing, and now the people have broken out against the Gospodar. But there's no holding them any longer, especially the women. They want to see him.

JUVAN

They will see him.

AMERICAN

Congratulations, student. You know people. You did a good job not to show the hidden one, but to bring him here tight in a covered cage.

JUVAN

Fear death, if you cannot believe.

AMERICAN

Don't let's fool ourselves, sir. I see straight. I wasn't born yesterday. I learned a lot across the



water. There are great settlements there, and suddenly the spirit comes over these sons of Adam; they pray wildly, journey over the land, murdering and burning in religious frenzy, tearing the clothes from their bodies, and practicing vice in the name of the Lord. But there's something to be learned by a man with brains, from both God and madness.

## JUVAN

I lived a prisoner in my body. Then came the vision, fever broke loose in me, and seized you all. I will do my work because I believe. And you, American, must believe too!

## AMERICAN

Like you I will believe in revenge. My father ended very high. Five feet above ground.

## TEITERLIK

The crowd's outside!

*Scene Five*

[*Enter BOGOBOJ, dressed as at the end of Act Three.*]

## BOGOBOJ

Prince of the people! Son of the unknown! You are to prophesy and show him to us.

JUVAN

How strong is your madness, how high your faith?

BOGBOJ

Of blood we have drunken that was wine. And of wine that was blood.

JUVAN

Are you ready, then, for the service?

BOGBOJ

We are thirsty unto death for the mass, we are rav-  
ening for the liturgy.

*Scene Six*

[*The crowd flows into the room, drunk and lusting for miracles. Men and women carry all sorts of weapons, scythes and threshing flails, and a few tar torches.*]

CHORUS

Let us see him . . . see him . . . see him!

KRUNA

[*At JUVAN's feet*]: You our lord, exalt us!

JUVAN

You are not yet fit to worship his presence.

KRUNA

Teach us!

JUVAN

If you can grasp his meaning you may redeem the world.

KRUNA

And you our ruler.

BOGOBOJ

Many centuries have you slept. Now you are awake.

JUVAN

What are you all?

KRUNA

Men!

JUVAN

That is just it. He says unto you, "Be men no more."

KRUNA

What are we to be?

JUVAN

Look into your soul and find the answer. [KRUNA looks at JUVAN with a curious expression, then slowly loosens her long hair, and shakes her head so that it floats about her.] Have you seen and understood?

KRUNA

Release!

CHORUS

[*On a scream*]: Release——!

JUVAN

Yes, release! For man is knotted, man is cramped——

CHORUS

Break through our torment——

[JUVAN *breaks a great cross over his knee and throws it into the crowd.*]

FEIWEL

Oi, my poor brother!

JUVAN

Man is the animal crucified.

BOGBOJ

Did you hear the word?

KRUNA

Lord, take us from the cross!

JUVAN

I will give you back to the fields, you doe with the dancing eyes! All of you! In your eyes I see the

struggle of animals in death. I am wide awake. I see the beasts. There! Look of the murdered stallion! There! Look of the strangled wild cat. There! Last glint from the eyes of a dying wolf.

*[The vision of the faces is too strong. He closes his eyes for a moment.]*

KRUNA

Free the poor animal!

CHORUS

Free the beast!

JUVAN

*[Gesturing toward the royal door of the Ikonostasis]:* The sight of him will free you!

CHORUS

Show us the holy god!

*[The people start a wild milling. The women shake out their unbound hair and begin to tear their clothes. The men have hard work to keep on their faces the expression of sullen brooding embarrassment which is the lightning that precedes a frightful mass outbreak.]*

JUVAN

He is the way back, the way home. We broke out of the ancient forests of night, blinking in the sunlight.

Let us return to the forest. Our eyes will become big and quiet again. He will lead us home to the night when our task is done, when nothing built by man is left standing; when the hereditary lie is wiped out and vengeance wreaked on man; when the last plow lies rotting in a bloody ditch.

## BOGOBOJ

[*Holds an embroidered vestment before him*]: So, with three fingers, I grasp the narrow stola of the diakon and hurry down through the temple, flying with the drunken flight of the heavenly spirits. . . . [*Moves tottering through the church.*] To the services, you believers! Come, rouse your sense to the surge of the mass, to the flow of the ritual.  
[*Turns back to the Ikonostas. Chorus turns, as one, to the altar.*]

## JUVAN

Begin your service, Diakon.

## BOGOBOJ

So be it.

## JUVAN

What light is fitting to receive him?

## BOGOBOJ

Darkness.

JUVAN

What color for his greeting?

BOGOBOJ

Color of flesh slain in lust.

JUVAN

What music to acclaim him?

BOGOBOJ

Swelling and deafening.

JUVAN

Where are the musicians?

BOGOBOJ

You grimy ones. Begin!

*[Charcoal burners group at one side of the altar. They wear fur clothing and horn ornaments on their heads. Their instruments are drums, bag-pipes, tambourine, and two-sided guzla. Candles go out.]*

AMERICAN

*[To JUVAN]:* Enough of this madness! Are you bent on destruction?

*[The charcoal burners start, softly, at first, to play their monotonous music which repeats one rhythmic figure again and again. JUVAN steps into the shadow.]*

## BOGBOJ

[*Enchanted*]: Beloved, sing the litany with me!  
 [*Psalm-wise.*]

Tragos Lyaïos Oikoloi  
 Venga Venga Chaire moi  
 Pomiluj Nas Pomiluj!

[*Music becomes louder and quicker.*]

## CHORUS

[*On their knees.*]

Tragos Lyaïos Oikoloi  
 Venga Venga Chaire moi  
 Pomiluj Nas Pomiluj!

[*The women start screaming, the men cry out gaspingly.*]

## FEIWEL

[*In the grip of his eternal difference, prays*]: Shma  
 ysroel, adonoi, elohenu adonoi echod.

## AMERICAN

[*Fighting the hypnosis in vain*]: I have a clear  
 head, but it's got me. [*Throws himself down howling.*] Pomiluj Nas Pomiluj!

## ALL

[*In a rhythmic daze*]: Pomiluj Nas Pomiluj!  
 [JUVAN *steps forth.*]



*Scene Seven*

[STEVEN, the MOTHER, MIRKO, STANJA, BABKA, the ELDERS of MODRYGOR and KRASNOKRAJ, a few farm-hands with lanterns, make a path for themselves through the throng, which gives way before them, suddenly dumb. Music breaks off.]

STEVAN

[His foot on the altar step, to JUVAN]: Rioters! Blasphemers, murderers! I come unarmed, with the women of my household, bringing you the message of the Elders.

CHORUS

Beat them to death!

JUVAN

Not a sound from you! [To STEVAN.] And what do you wish?

STEVAN

You have burned down our villages, more ruthless than the Turkish hordes. You have murdered and maimed men, women and children, dazed and defenceless. If I wished to act according to the word of men and God I would not be standing here.

JUVAN

What do you want?

STEVAN

My heart was always too soft. Do you think I sent riders to the city to the Turkish governor, for soldiers to trample down your madmen? No, I did not send, you bloodsuckers. Understand that!

AMERICAN

We're not crazy enough to swallow that!

JUVAN

And what do you wish?

STEVAN

I wish to bargain with you. You destroyer in a scholar's coat!

JUVAN

What do you want us to do?

STEVAN

Drop your weapons, your plunder, your torches, and disband.

JUVAN

What do you offer in return?

STEVAN

Is it not enough that you go free and unpunished?

JUVAN

That is not the sort of bargain you bargainers are in the habit of making.

STEVAN

Kneel before me, all of you and hear the merciful decision of the council of elders. If you submit immediately, all the bloodshed will be forgotten, and . . . kneel, weep, you murderers . . . and every landless, wandering immigrant will receive some of our waste land and seed for its sowing.

[CHORUS *silent and sullen.*]

TEITERLIK

[*Whimpering*]: Though I'm a lieutenant . . .  
land . . . my land . . .

JUVAN

You have not told us all your demands.

STEVAN

[*Softly*]: You must surrender him—instantly.

JUVAN

Whom?

STEVAN

[*Shamefaced, between his teeth*]: The unbaptised!

JUVAN

His name!

STEVAN

[*Writhing with shame*]: Don't pretend, you fiend!  
There—in the holy of holies . . .

JUVAN

Name him!

STEVAN

[*Loudly, tonelessly*]: His name? I do not know  
his name. He is my son.

MIRKO

Father! You!

BOGOBOJ

A God was born to the poor in a stable.

MAN'S VOICE

But this one was born to the rich.

WOMAN'S VOICE

Hehehahaha! The rich people's secret!

BOGOBOJ

Who dares say: "He is my son?"

JUVAN

Gospodar! Your demand is refused.  
He, who is our victory, remains.

STEVAN

Who stands in a father's way?  
[*Tries to advance, but armed men who have gathered  
about JUVAN hold their weapons toward him.*]

MOTHER

[*Stepping forward*]: This father hates his son.  
But no man knows what my life has been since that day.  
Let me go to him. . . .

BABKA

Back, woman. [*Pushes MOTHER aside.*] His parents  
denied him. But I suckled him, I nursed him, his only  
servant till this day. I alone have power over him.  
He went to sleep to my songs. [*To JUVAN*]: Devil!  
I warn you. Let me coax him.

JUVAN

There is another woman with you!

MIRKO

[*Seizes STANJA in an iron grip*]: Hide!

JUVAN

Gospodar! See, I'll show you what Juvan is. Suddenly he changes his mind. He spits now on what was

precious and holy to him. Your terms are accepted and I will close with you.

## CHORUS

Traitor.

## AMERICAN

I never understood him. . . .

## BOGOBOJ

Bow to the will. It does not come from him.

## JUVAN

[*Very emphatically*]: I close with you. You shall have him. He returns if she, the pretty one, there—Mirko's bride, if . . . if she goes in and leads him to you.

## STEVAN

The face that its father did not dare to look on, year after year . . . she, a maiden?

## JUVAN

She can save you.

## STEVAN

[*Softly, horrified*]: Away from here, my daughter!

## MIRKO

[*Slackly, with infinite sadness*]: For the second time we must flee from him, Stanja. The student is

stronger than we. And . . . we bring no happiness for each other . . . I shall die without you.  
. . . I release you.

ELDERS OF KRASNOKRAJ AND MODRYGOR

[*Whispering to STANJA*]: Do not be afraid. We'll arm ourselves and take you back secretly to your parents.

STEVAN'S FAMILY AND THE ELDERS

[*Speaking all together to STANJA, softly*]: Away! Softly! Unnoticed! Escape!

JUVAN

What answer?

STANJA

[*Slowly ascending the altar steps*]: This!  
[*STANJA and JUVAN look long into each other's eyes.*]

BOGOBOJ

[*Seized by a fit of trembling*]: Children! The secret of the mass is at hand!

CHORUS

[*Moved, melodious*]:

The fair one is fair,  
A wreath of ribbon in her hair,  
And bridal clothes, and bridal clothes.

KRUNA

[*Wraps herself in her hair*]: Weep!  
[*Russian music, softly, in a different rhythm.*]

MOTHER

Never has he seen a young woman. She goes to her death.

MIRKO

To my brother.

JUVAN

Stanja. Am I your enemy now?

STANJA

Not as much as I am yours.

JUVAN

Are you doing this to save your people?

STANJA

Mine? They are not mine.

JUVAN

Why are you doing it then, Stanja?

STANJA

Robber! I fling away your booty!



JUVAN

[*Haughtily concealing his defeat*]: Step down.  
You shall not be my sacrifice.

STANJA

Your sacrifice? Who are you? Did I ever know you? I do not know. [*She bends before the Ikonostas.*] Here I have already stood to receive God. [*Rising above her triumph.*] Go, servant! Open!

JUVAN

Here is a knife for you.  
You understand? A knife.

STANJA

[*Takes the knife*]: I will cut through his bonds.  
But for myself I will not use it. Open!  
[JUVAN raises his hand, but cannot move. STANJA,  
without looking back, disappears through the  
royal gate. Music ceases.]

### Scene Eight

[MIRKO has taken the half of the broken cross with the  
two silver-set arms and throws himself on  
JUVAN.]

## MIRKO

For the second time I meet you! [*He falls upon the outstretched steel of one of the guards.*] Oh . . .  
oh . . . oh . . . Father . . . oh . . .  
oh . . . oh.  
[*Dies.*]

## STEVAN

[*Kneeling by the dead man, after a long pause*]:  
He is not breathing. [*With a hoarse cry*]: But  
he. . . .

## MOTHER

[*Who cannot hide the crazy light of sinful joy in her eyes*]: Justice! O Justice!  
[*Throws herself upon the corpse.*]

## BABKA

[*Coldly, seeing the mother's conflicting emotions*]:  
Woman! Stand up!

## STEVAN

[*Rises. In a hard voice, to a farmhand*]: Take  
hold of the dead man and lift him.

## MODRYGOR

Brother! Are you going to desert the girl?

STEVAN

Her betrothed is dead. She is no longer ours.  
Pass.

[*Men with the corpse move toward the door, STEVAN, MOTHER, BABKA following.*]

KRASNOKRAJ

[*To MODRYGOR*]: Kinsman! Let us hide and wait for the daughter of Kauzelni vrh.

STEVAN

[*Calling into the room from the church door*]: If you want to destroy us, hurry. I deceived you. The Janissaries have been on the march for hours.

[*He and his family off.*]

*Scene Nine*

BOGOBOJ

I feel the holy approach. Prepare! Pray! A moment more, and you will see him.

CHORUS

[*Drowning their rising fear in song*]: Pomiluj Nas Pomiluj.

[*JUVAN suddenly, starting up, in haggard triumph.*]

JUVAN

Jew, out to the green. To the linden bell! Ring, Jew, ring the bells, the wedding bells.

## FEIWEL

Hei! Hei! The Jew is going to ring the Christian bells, the Jew, the Jew!

[*Runs off.*]

## AMERICAN

It seemed to me just now that I heard distant trumpets.

## TEITERLIK

Damn! I'd rather be on a rope stretched between two roofs. The chill of dawn is in my bones. Who wants my job?

## JUVAN

What have I done?

[*A monstrous cry of joy sings on, descending chromatically, not human, inhumanly superhuman, sounding from the holy of holies. The bells chime in wildly.*]

## BOGOBOJ

Lo, the miracle!

## KRUNA

Why did you not sacrifice me?

## CHORUS

She is dead.

[*JUVAN, with a hollow cry, throws himself against the royal gate. BOGOBOJ bars his way with outstretched arms.*]

JUVAN

Save her. . . .

BOGOBOJ

Stay not the sacrifice.

JUVAN

Back, old man.

BOGOBOJ

Endure the holy moment.

[*He clings to JUVAN with monstrous strength.*]

JUVAN

I suffer.

[*They struggle. The bells cease. The two ELDERS appear by the altar rail.*]

KRASNOKRAJ

Hold me! My knees are trembling.

MODRYGOR

There! Ah, I saw something! Now! There! Behind that last window. A girl's shadow. Quick! Through the little door.

[*They disappear through a secret door.*]

FEIWEL

[*Appears at the rail, his teeth chattering, softly*]:  
Horns! Horns sound from all the hills——  
[*Makes off.*]

## JUVAN

[*Has overcome the giant old man, who totters aside*]: Stanja!

[*Scarcely has he taken the first wild step toward the holy of holies when he becomes rigid.*]

## CHORUS

He is coming!

[*Everyone on the stage retreats, a dark mass. The great royal gate of the Ikonostas slowly opens of its own accord. Behind it the great high altar becomes visible, blindingly radiant with a thousand candles.*]

## BOGOBOJ

[*On his face*]: I see.

## CHORUS

[*Prostrate*]: We see him.

[*The high altar is tremulous with flame. Before the audience can see anything else clearly the curtain falls.*]

## CURTAIN

## ACT FIVE





## ACT FIVE

*[The ruins of STEVAN's farm, the courtyard. In the background the walls of the outbuildings. The big courtyard door alone stands open and unharmed, and behind it the devastated fields are visible.]*

*Left, the blackened but not crumbled farmhouse, with the door, to which three steps lead. At either side of the door a rough bench. In the middle a spring. Right foreground a small grassy rise in the ground, rising off into the wings, indicates that a street leads through the courtyard. Late morning.]*

### *Scene One*

*[STEVEAN and the PHYSICIAN step out of the door.]*

### PHYSICIAN

*[Playing with the key]:* Your secret, this key to it, and my absent-mindedness, have sufficed, and a whole little world has been destroyed. Oh marvelously complete chain of causation which needs no superhuman agency to fulfill its inevitable wonders. God himself, as Voltaire says, would have to convert himself to atheism.

STEVAN

What's all that you're saying?

PHYSICIAN

Ah, yes, I know. The secret was the primal cause that started it. But what, at bottom, is your secret? Nothing but leftover fears, the dregs, the undigested food in the belly of evolution. Ah, you ought to learn to read French.

STEVAN

Sir!

PHYSICIAN

Superstition, Stevan Milic, that's all it was—yours and theirs. You cannot blame me. I always warned you. I offered over and over again to take the fearful changeling to a home. But vanity with its serpent eye froze all of you in terror. A day had to come when the stench would be discovered, even in the house of the mighty. . . . Now it has been hideously brought to light.

STEVAN

Yes, and in all my misery I thank God for it.

PHYSICIAN

The superstition of those poor people is more justifiable than yours. For need and suffering crave re-

demption, and they easily see God or His opposite in a human monster.

STEVAN

Now I, too, am as poor as the poorest.

PHYSICIAN

[*Claps him on the shoulder, heartily*]: You won't be for long. For a man is born to poverty or riches just as he is to prophecy. It is simply a certain arrangement of the human tissues. The rabble have shed much blood, but the soldiers have shed even more blood of theirs. The poor pay double. Did you lose your son?

STEVAN

Both sons, Master.

PHYSICIAN

The other, they say, ran off into the burning woods and died there.

STEVAN

Stifled or burned to death, who knows?

PHYSICIAN

Did they find him?

STEVAN

I have asked no one.

PHYSICIAN

Well, life still lies before you.

STEVAN

I feel as if I had lived many lives.

PHYSICIAN

You are only fifty.

STEVAN

And now for the first time I feel as though that age were really youth.

PHYSICIAN

I wish I were made of your mettle. [*Looks at the house-walls.*] Traces of the Janissaries' bullets here, too. After all, the best of them was the student. What do you know of him?

STEVAN

Not a lad of us but knew his pretty mother once.

PHYSICIAN

He was a great man. He was well known to the authorities, an arch-schemer, slippery as an eel. My diagnosis is a plain case of religious mania. They will never let him off with a flogging.

STEVAN

I hate no one any more.

## PHYSICIAN

And that crazy graybeard, the prophet, nothing could be done for him, either. They buried him yesterday.

## STEVAN

Tell me, Doctor, how could all these things happen in so short a time?

## PHYSICIAN

The world of men, my friend, no less than that of nature, has, I regret to say, its unplumbed seasons, eclipses, northern lights, and magnetic storms; convulsions of the established order. Original chaos surges to the surface. The animal hidden in us takes possession.

## STEVAN

I do not understand what you are saying. But it may well be. For all my sorrow my heart feels so light, so light!

## PHYSICIAN

That is a noble sentiment, Stevan Milic! Haha! See how catastrophes, like everything else, are only there to be gabbled about. And over there in the shed lies a poor patient shot through the lung. A poor rope-dancer, who cannot live out the day. I must steal a march on that damned priest. [*Raises his tricorn.*]

You can always find me, if you want me. Excuse me now.

[*Off.*]

*Scene Two*

[*MOTHER appears in the doorway.*]

STEVAN

Mother! [*Takes her by the hand.*] Have you come out of that black room at last, and dressed in this lovely old dress I like so well?

MOTHER

Yes, Father. This morning dawned so blue . . .  
I . . . I . . . I . . . Come sit down with me,  
Father!

[*They sit on the bench by the door.*]

STEVAN

What are you hiding from me?

MOTHER

I am lost. I must tell you something terrible, something mortally sinful.

STEVAN

I know. Say it!

MOTHER

Mortal sin, Father.

STEVAN

Say the word, Mother.

MOTHER

[*Softly*]: I am happy.

STEVAN

I understand. I, too . . . I too . . .  
[*Buries his head in his hands.*] . . . am happy.

MOTHER

Our children are dead.

STEVAN

The wellformed and the other.

MOTHER

Our pride and our shame.

STEVAN

One could not live without the other. That was fate.

MOTHER

Eternal bliss is barred to me . . . for, Father  
. . . as Mirko lay bleeding . . . happiness  
welled up in my heart, happiness for the other one.

STEVAN

He was the one you really loved.

MOTHER

I never looked upon his face. So he was my pain day in and day out. And yet I worshipped him, the poor accursed one. Now he has gone in flaming death . . . I suffer . . . and yet I am released.

STEVAN

Released! Children do not make men happy.

MOTHER

Only women, as long as the milk is in their breasts.

STEVAN

But children and rooftree grow and crowd out man's heaven.

MOTHER

And his love.

STEVAN

Do you know, Mother, there is something else that makes me happy and young.

MOTHER

Tell me.

STEVAN

[*With a gesture toward the ruins*]: This destruction.



MOTHER

Yes, we are poor. The barns and dairies are burned down, the pens empty, the storehouses stripped . . .

STEVAN

But our hidden shame is gone. This I have discovered: Possession is concealment and in all order grins the hidden thing. And as our secrets wax, so wanes our youth. But to shoulder each day, boldly carefree, singing, that . . . that is youth. [*Stretches out his arms.*] And I have it again.

MOTHER

Father!

STEVAN

Mother!

MOTHER

What are you saying? We are no longer father and mother.

STEVAN

True, father and mother no longer. But what are we?

MOTHER

Don't you know the word?

STEVAN

[*Looks at her long*]: Wife!

## GOAT SONG

MOTHER

[*Her voice trembling*]: Husband!

STEVAN

So long since I used that word——

MOTHER

[*Tears streaming*]: So long . . . and where was I?

STEVAN

By my side. But awakening from all this fever I see you now, you . . . for the first time I see you again.

MOTHER

But this is no longer I——

STEVAN

I had to lose everything to find you.

MOTHER

I am no longer I.

STEVAN

Lovelier, lovelier, than ever I find you. The sun, this golden sun on your face—what matter if it is the light of your sunset?

MOTHER

You never looked at me when I was beautiful.

STEVAN

The ripened years are best. This gray in your hair moves me, moves me so, so deeply. [*Hovering over her.*] Holy—sweet—mysterious.

MOTHER

[*Her voice fails*]: You . . .

STEVAN

No silver wedding will I seal with you but our second betrothal . . . [MOTHER *sinks into his arms.*] . . . with this kiss! [*They kiss long and deeply. He rises, stamps his feet wide apart, loudly.*] Ah! He! Ho! Haha! Wife! You! Mine! I am new, all new. Do you hear? Bold, unthinking, whistling, to meet the day. [*After a little pause.*] An old lame horse is all that's left, but we can harness him and start again singing . . . hahaha . . . singing!

[*Goes off to the fields through the courtyard door.*

MOTHER *looks after him, her arms timidly stretched toward him.*]

*Scene Three*

[STANJA *enters slowly, sits on the edge of the well and remains rigid, impenetrable.*]

## GOAT SONG

MOTHER

Still here!

STANJA

Always here. Why do you distrust me, Mother?

MOTHER

Our son is dead. Nothing more binds you to us.

STANJA

I stay true to your son, Mother.

MOTHER

Your people have sent for you.

STANJA

My people! Always my people. Who are my people! Let me stay with you.

MOTHER

You see there is no longer any home here. Your place is where wealth and happiness are, at home where the new suitors are already standing at the door. Here there is room for nothing but hard hands that want to work.

STANJA

My hands want to work, Mother.

MOTHER

Why should you wear out your days with us old folk that have worn out our own?

STANJA

Because I am true to your son.

MOTHER

You never loved him, you strange girl, and now he is dead.

STANJA

Why do you distrust me?

MOTHER

I don't distrust you any more. When you came to us, young, pretty, silent, my haughty daughter-in-law, with your youthful breasts, a stranger, then I did hate you. I do not know what happened to you that night. Let me see your face. [STANJA *turns her face away.*] Child! I no longer hate you. No, I trust you now.

STANJA

Then let me stay here.

MOTHER

Why do you not tell——

STANJA

[*From a distance*]: Tell——

## MOTHER

No, don't tell me. Ah, when I look at you I cannot believe you are so much younger than I, daughter. Now I begin to love you.

## STANJA

I know you are not my enemy any longer.

## MOTHER

That is just why it is that, with a heavy heart, I tell you . . . go, go. What do you want here? Everything is soon over for a woman. She has only one day, one hour, on which to build her power. You will find a new man, you are so pretty; perhaps a better man.

## STANJA

I am true to your son. Let me stay. I am not afraid to work. Let me help you, Mother.

*Scene Four*

[FEIWEL, *his peddler's pack on his back, comes along the road.*]

## FEIWEL

[*From a distance, in great excitement*]: God, how much has happened! God, what I have had to see! Almighty, what I am still living through! This lovely courtyard, this princely courtyard, this royal court-

yard. Eijajajei! Such a fortune. Gone! [*Clenching his fists.*] The blood hounds.

## MOTHER

You cannot have lost much, Feiwei. You carry your wealth on your back.

## FEIWEI

Is sympathy nothing, and sleepless nights? It is true my fortune is all moveable, but that's just why I mix with so many people. With my soft heart . . . how can I—help myself? . . . I have to live everyone's sorrows, his bankruptcies, his misfortunes. God, what don't I have to bear? The Christians are wonderful beings, but they don't know what sympathy is.

## MOTHER

And yet you egged them on and spoke for them.

## FEIWEI

[*Answers with an exaggerated start*]: God of Justice, who put that lie on me? My enemies, the godless in Mizraim. I am an educated man. I can read the German newspapers, and I know what politics is. And because I'm a born speaker I made a speech to the Elders. What good did it do me? I spoke up for the starving out of sympathy. The greatest statesmen make speeches pro and con. And that is why, God of

Justice, they call me a man who egged them on? But of course, when the hail falls, the Jew is stoned.

MOTHER

Weren't you one of the wildest, Feiwei?

FEIWEL

I? Woe! I must sit down. [*Sits on the bench.*] That is my fate. I am in it but not in it and not in it but in it. I was coming along the road just like now. Feiwei is weak—Feiwei is timid. Feiwei would never make trouble, but they swept me along. Why did I go? Why? To calm the wild Goyim. I was only a Kibbitzer. Out of sympathy for you. But I know, you want to accuse me, ruin me . . .

MOTHER

No, not that, Jew. I accuse no one.

FEIWEL

That is a speech that God will write down in His golden book. All those whom He would smite—He has smitten. The American is dead. The ropedancer—he's dying, and the leader of the rabble——

STANJA

[*Nonchalantly*]: The leader?



FEIWEL

[*Shades his eyes, peering into the distance*]: Wait, perhaps we can see it from here.

STANJA

What?

FEIWEL

[*Grinning*]: Ah, miss, nothing for you. Still, I must say, with all respects for the young miss . . .

STANJA

What are you looking at?

FEIWEL

You can't see it from here.

STANJA

What can't be seen?

FEIWEL

What they've fixed on the hill for the student.

STANJA

[*Quietly*]: Then it is all over?

## FEIWEL

No! It takes place at noon. But the crowd is gathering now. Something else only Christians can stand. [*Takes his pack off.*] But I'm forgetting business. I'll show you what kind of a man I am. I am the only one who fitted himself to what has happened. In the midst of the fighting, (oh my cramps), I got hold of all the things that are needed for building homes again. [*Peddler's whine.*] Nails of all sizes, practical tools for sale, lime, real gold cheap collar-buttons, Christian holy pictures, guaranteed durable, sweet-tasting laxative . . .

## MOTHER

Go, Feiwei.

## FEIWEL

I stay where I'm not wanted? Your servant, ladies. [*Zigzags off.*]

## STANJA

[*Takes MOTHER's hand*]: Mother?

## MOTHER

I do not understand you, but . . . [*Kisses her.*]  
 . . . live with us from now on, bride of my son. I will tell my husband.

[*STANJA sinks her head on her breast, MOTHER goes into the house. STANJA sits on the edge of the well again.*]

*Scene Five*

[*Enter* GOSPODAR JEVREM VESILIC *and* STANJA'S MOTHER.]

JEVREM

We have come ourselves. You paid no attention to all our messengers and the wagon that was to have fetched you came back empty.

STANJA'S MOTHER

So we toiled along the hard road ourselves, child, and we have come to take you home.

STANJA

[*As if she had not heard*]: How are you, Father and Mother?

JEVREM

Heaven destroys only Sodom.

STANJA'S MOTHER

But he spares the righteous.

JEVREM

We have no evil secret.

STANJA'S MOTHER

And we hide no sin in our house.

JEVREM

Pride goes before a fall.

STANJA'S MOTHER

A pitcher at the edge of a table is ready to be smashed.

JEVREM

It is well that they are not here so we need speak no false words.

STANJA'S MOTHER

The souls of the righteous shun the godless. . . .

JEVREM

And we are glad nothing came of it.

STANJA'S MOTHER

The dead man was a rag in the wind. Sorrow and shame has been all our portion.

JEVREM

Such a match. We are highly respected, but it is almost a stain on us.

STANJA'S MOTHER

We will burn candles.

JEVREM

And we have just the man for you.

STANJA'S MOTHER

A better man. . . .

JEVREM

With a family such as you don't get every day.

STANJA'S MOTHER

And they are richer than these here were.

JEVREM

Be happy, then, you wicked girl, and say a word to us.

STANJA

I am Milic's betrothed, Father.

JEVREM

[*Overcome by excitement against his daughter*]:  
Don't cross me, girl. I came. But I am full of wrath.

STANJA'S MOTHER

You are not the same to us after all this business.

STANJA

What harm did I do you?

JEVREM

Everybody is to blame for his own misfortunes.

## STANJA'S MOTHER

You always were one for not wanting to obey, you sly cat. That brings misfortune.

JEVREM

All your friends bring their parents happiness. All of them well married. Misfortune is a disgrace.

STANJA

I obeyed you, my parents.

JEVREM

Yes, but unwillingly, and with the bit between your teeth. We do not understand you. I beat you too little.

STANJA

Why do you abuse me now?

JEVREM

Bad results deserve the stick.

STANJA

You brought me to this house yourselves.

JEVREM

Don't contradict your father. The gall is rising in me. Come now.

STANJA

I stay here, my parents, in my widowhood.

STANJA'S MOTHER

Widowhood, you crazy thing? You are a virgin, and that is the only thing left to you that pays.

JEVREM

For the last time I tell you, come.

STANJA

Go back home, Father and Mother.

JEVREM

[*Furious, raises his stick at her*]: Ah! Woe! You belong to me. Get up, you bitch. The devil knows what you've been up to.

STANJA'S MOTHER

Jesus! Can't you see what you're doing to your father? Don't anger him any more. He is old.

JEVREM

[*Gasping*]: My heart, my heart . . .

STANJA'S MOTHER

[*Shrieks*]: If anything happens to him, you killed him.

STANJA

Father and Mother, go away from here, go.

## JEVREM

I go, go. I won't drag you away, I won't see you again, you are no longer my daughter. But one last word. If by to-morrow sundown you have not crept home hugging the cross, you will die of my curse. [*Bellying.*] My curse!  
[*Quickly off.*]

## STANJA'S MOTHER

[*Hurrying after him*]: Vesilic, don't! Don't, Jevrem Vesilic. [*She calls back menacingly.*] You! You——

## STANJA

[*Alone*]: Not of this curse will I die. [*Choked.*] Where? . . . Where? Where?  
[*Looks in the same direction as FEIWEL did, then suddenly turns to find JUVAN, in chains, before her. Behind him is an escort consisting of the BASHI BAZOOK and two soldiers.*]

*Scene Six*

## JUVAN

Bashi Bazook! Did I take advantage of the privilege of the condemned?

## BASHI

You waved aside the food and left the wine standing.



JUVAN

Then you still owe me the fulfillment of a wish.

BASHI

That is not written in my orders.

JUVAN

Nor is it written in your orders that if you deny me I can still escape. It would not be the first time.

BASHI

I will have your feet shackled.

JUVAN

There is no need. See the truth in my eyes. You have my word. Let me talk to this woman, only for a moment. I will give you no trouble.

BASHI

Will you keep your word?

JUVAN

See the truth in my eyes!

BASHI

Then for your sake I will overstep my orders, even though you do eat unclean meat. [*Commanding the two Janissaries.*] About face. Ten paces forward.

March! Halt. Turn. [*Soldiers posted outside audience's line of vision. BASHI commands them.*] Shoulder arms. Hup, hup, hup. [*To JUVAN.*] Make one move and you will both be shot. I shall stand over there and count several times to a hundred. [*Off to the soldiers.*]

*Scene Seven*

JUVAN

You know where I am going. [*STANJA silent.*] I knew that I would meet you on this road. So I went with my eyes closed.

STANJA

I waited.

JUVAN

You know the fearful question burning in me, Stanja.

STANJA

[*Very tenderly*]: I know it. Go in peace, in peace, Juvan.

JUVAN

But he screamed, a scream of love!

STANJA

Clean I am and yours, until death. Go in peace, Juvan.

JUVAN

How is it, beloved? This is the first time I have spoken to you. And yet how many paths we have walked together hand in hand.

STANJA

This is not the first time I speak to you. I have heard this new voice of yours in many dreams.

JUVAN

Speak, speak, speak! Back there a man is counting.

STANJA

One rainy night you came into the house for shelter. You sat on the bench and I passed through the room, once, twice . . .

JUVAN

I have . . . forgotten.

STANJA

I have not forgotten.

JUVAN

Wait! I have not forgotten. In my darkness, searching—a gleam of light beneath the door.

STANJA

And though you did not recognize me when I sat at the table with my betrothed, I know you knew me.

JUVAN

Yes. That is so. Why else should I have had to wound you? And then the secret leaped between us.

STANJA

[*Very softly*]: The animal.

JUVAN

See! Now I feel as if the secret had broken loose from us. [*Grasping her hand.*] No, no. Not from you . . . me!

STANJA

[*Low, as if comforted*]: Was it you?

JUVAN

But I threw you before him.

STANJA

[*A flash of bitterness in her pride*]: That is not true. I conquered you. I went in myself, of my free will.

JUVAN

You conquered me. As I gave you the knife, trembling, I was lost, my cause was lost, and that of my people, and the Turkish crescent threatened from the hill.

STANJA

[*Mothering*]: You, . . . now you have come to me.

JUVAN

Madness! Who was I! Who! Lying on my back I stared at the dead sky without thoughts, full only of a passion for vengeance on something I had never known, perhaps my unknown father. Hate for the secure, the righteous, the smug, and pious. Longing to return to animal eyes and breath. Only one lust in me, the lust for ruin. Only one happiness, to bellow into the storm, only one light, the light of a great fire. Forever joined to my companions in my thirst for the ecstasy of destruction. But then . . .

STANJA

Then, my love?

JUVAN

Then came day after all those burning nights, and I woke under this spring sky. It is my last day. Because I hated, a woman had to shatter and wake me. Oh, the miracle of the morning came to me. For the first time I heard the lark, a burning song against the sun, and a shout broke from me because of the wonder of the world. Then I knew you, you, everywhere.

## STANJA

Speak, speak, speak. A man is counting over there.

## JUVAN

Loving you, I loved. My chained hand was softly hollowed to gather, to caress. Oh woman, with your clear strong limbs! Love . . . first love . . . is so strong . . . so strong. . . .  
[*Tears run down his cheeks.*]

## STANJA

Then tell me, mouth that is still alive, why, if we were made for one another, it was not to be?

## JUVAN

Because everything eternal fears fulfillment.

## STANJA

[*Screaming*]: I want you, forever, forever. Do not go from me, now. I must tell you.

## JUVAN

[*Tearing at his chains*]: Stanja! Speak!  
He . . .

## STANJA

[*In a shining voice*]: No, my beloved. No! This life is yours.

JUVAN

Are you saying that just to make my dying easier?

STANJA

[*Clings to him*]: How can I live when you no longer live?

JUVAN

[*Suddenly*]: I feel he has stopped counting.

STANJA

Listen and act quickly, while there is time. If you love me, let us die together. One step and they will kill us both.

JUVAN

Tell me again that you escaped unharmed.

STANJA

You know the truth. And now, my life, just a few steps. They will shoot and all will be well.

JUVAN

[*After a pause*]: No!

STANJA

[*Trembling*]: There is yet time.

JUVAN

No, you must live. I must know that you, my wife, are still in the world like light and like warmth and that I leave a hearth behind me.

STANJA

[*Sliding down to his feet*]: Again you deny me. Again!

*Scene Eight*

[BASHI BAZOOK and soldiers appear.]

BASHI

I have graciously counted. Now come, student!  
[*Lays his hand on him.*]

JUVAN

[*Shakes off the hand*]: You are only the last link in the chain of my destiny. Death is the climax of my life's fulfillment.

[*Quickly off, followed by the escort.*]

STANJA

[*Alone*]: A mere moment longer for him. But I must bear out my life—all my life—accursed.

MOTHER

[*Stepping out of the house*]: I have cooked a meal. We must call your father. Who is coming?



*Ninth and Last Scene*

[*Drunken HANGMAN-trapper comes in his rude wagon drawn by a miserable donkey.*]

HANGMAN

Huah! Prr! Prr!

Hey! You women of the house! Have you a little brandy left? [*Women silent in horror.*] What, no one here? The inn gone? Well! I have enough for now. Do you know me?

MOTHER

Go away. . . . Hangman!

HANGMAN

Ow, what, what a name. I'm a state . . . state . . . offizhiel. But if you knew what I have to-day! [*Singing a folksong.*]

The hero walks unharmed  
Through fire and war before us  
And lead us on to victory.

[*Snaps his whip.*]

Business is good!

MOTHER

[*Swaying*]: Into the house!

STANJA

[*Holds her back*]: No, stay!

## HANGMAN

Ah, I knew, cu . . . curious, like all the women.  
But I'm always nice to pretty ladies. To-day I have  
three spiked dogs, three drowned cats, all very good  
skins, in the wagon here . . . and then, . . .  
Cur . . . curious women are.

## MOTHER

Let me go!

## STANJA

[*Holds her in an iron grip*]: Stay!

## HANGMAN

And then something very, *very* curious. It was lying there in the charred wood, lying, lying there without a hair singed. A wonder. The priest must bless it for me. Here I have the fiend himself to whom my soul would soon belong. . . . [MOTHER *screams softly. Distant whirl of drums.*]

Go on drumming. No more gallows goods for the furrier. [STANJA *advances a little step.*] No! Can't do it! Got to pay to see it. And not even a sip of brandy for me. Huah, aho!  
[*Off with his wagon.*]

## MOTHER

[*Rousing after a long rigidity*]: He was in me, growing in my body. I bore and loved him. Even if

I did not dare look at him, yet I listened for ten thousand anguished nights toward the place where his heart was beating, and was happy that he lived. . . . And now he will be thrown to the carrion, he, who sprang from me, and not a name, not even a trace, of the secret of my womb will be left in the world.

## STANJA

You are wrong, Mother. He is still in the world.  
[*Coldly controlling a twitching.*] I am carrying his child.

## QUICK CURTAIN





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